THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE.

By a Wayfarer.

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THE SUCCESS OF FAILURE

By a Wayfarer
(Lillian Smith Tapman)

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FOREWORD

WHEN WRITING "The Success of Failure," in 1911 and 1912, its author did not contemplate the difficulty that would arise in the understanding of this book, so many of its readers not getting beyond the surface, the substance, abiding in the allegorical, not being perceived.

While those who have read it, declare it to be an interesting and beautiful book, they betray, in stating their conclusions, no evidence of an appreciation of that knowledge wherein lay the success of failure, its greater beauty, clothed in an instruction which it endeavors to impart, escaping them.

Therefore, its author has decided to review the book.

A grieving night greets us in the First Chapter. Shadow and tears in enfoldment, in which we behold incarceration and solitary confinement, witnessed in an abode of clay, MAN'S habitat of earth.

Obscured by the downcast of the heavens, our vision permits us not to behold in all verity the presence of the prisoner, domiciled in the decreed of the "Thou SHALT NOT" and the circumscribed of the "SO FAR, AND NO FARTHER," nor to perceive in that ruling the LORD-GOD, LAWFUL AUTHORITY in the realm of BEING.

The surrounding darkness of night also renders us oblivious to the sovereignty that abides within those citadels of correction, causing a wilderness of thought, in which the MIND of GOOD is not invoked, and a slavery to false perceptions is founded, through which no light peers, a blackness of lost hope blanketing ALL, from which suicidal dementia and the performances thereof are born.

That ALL shall not be lost, we are permitted to witness unto the HAND of INTERPOSITION, as it presents itself between the would-be suicide and the accomplishment thereof. And it is with awe that we make its acquaintance, believing it to be what it is not, failure of fulfillment.

Within its wordings of admonition, there are observations containing a priceless instruction, in which

is heralded the advent of learning, from which shall come a deathless knowledge, directing the WAY to an eternal understanding, to whose portals the seekers of a new birth come, to be reborn into the kingdom of a UNITED LOVE and SERVICE, to perceive not a bedraggled FAILURE, but the glorious vision of a never-ending creative SUCCESS.

The Second Chapter introduces us to the positive and negative, which are exemplified in the practices of two physicians, graduates of opposite schools of learning. One doctor, in the treatment which he accords to his patients, declares himself to be a recipient of an INSTRUCTION imparted to him by the UNIVERSITY of the ERUDITE TEACHING of a SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

Likewise, the other doctor, in the treatment which he accords to his patients, declares himself to be the manifestation of the school of which he is, the instructionless waste of a human wilderness, bespeaking the educational that abides in human thought.

Doctor Ross—LOVE—is the exponent of the former school of learning, and Doctor Gordon—a tired world's optimism—is the revelator of the latter. One, is the child of a faith that cometh by the WAY of KNOWLEDGE, the corner stone of which was laid aeons and aeons ago. The other, is the progeny of the speculative and cometh not by the way of a certainty, but by the dark shadows that lie on the other side of a doubtful hoping, the perhaps and maybe.

In the same chapter, we are presented to JOHN, the honorable and true, SERVANT of LOVE, who knows no authority but that of his MASTER, and is in obedience to no other. Here, also, we make the acquaintance of the Doctor's Nurse, daughter of human relations, and her little blind son, the visionless child of human contact, the illegitimate in the realm of spiritual thought, who makes known unto us the servant of human relations, as bereft of sight as the non-seeing whom they serve.

The Third Chapter brings to us the voice of WOMAN, the inefficient, reflecting effort in the domain of human endeavor. The imperfectly educated determining a service that shall bring forth a home-living place from a substanceless clay.

Chapter Four takes us into the confines of the

home-living place, where we meet MAN—Franklin Thompson—and CONVENTION—resident in the person of Margaret Gordon.

Chapter Five reveals MAN an established resident in the home-living place, over which an inadequacy, occupying the person of Dorothy Richardson—SERVICE—presides.

Chapter Six tells of a ride taken by Doctor Ross and Dorothy Richardson.

Chapter Seven brings the Doctor's Nurse and a friend of a human relationship that encompasses her with sorrow and shadows the being of her little blind son.

Chapter Eight reveals the long memory of the GREAT PHYSICIAN—LOVE—and the utter forgetfulness of the patient—MAN.

In the Ninth Chapter Franklin Thompson agrees to become a seeker of patients for Doctor Ross.

Chapter Ten reveals the unbeautiful garments in which human relations reside and are made known.

Chapter Eleven brings a great knowledge and an all-important understanding to the daughter of human relations, in which the soul and mind thereof proclaim the perfection of thought and the advent of the new creature.

Chapter Twelve speaks of MAN'S indisposition, and a telephone call from Mrs. Gordon, in which there is proclaimed the dire consequences that befall the defier of CONVENTION.

Chapter Thirteen introduces us to the MOTHER of HUMAN RELATIONS, circumscribed and bound by a decree of multiplication, in which is disclosed a day of great darkness, the children thereof lifting up their voices in bewailment of their birth, the penalization of an unfulfilled law declaring its arbiter.

> *"For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." St. Matthew, 5, 18.*

In Chapter Fourteen, we are permitted to vision the stillness that now possesses the turbulent waters of yesterday. In their quietude, we behold the SOUL that

is in KNOWLEDGE, flooding with light the far distant boundaries of a heritage awaiting the children of a NEW DAY.

In the Fifteenth Chapter, there is the pronouncement of a sickness that is unto death, and a treatment that is the declaration of LIFE. MAN—Franklin Thompson—is the avowal of the former, and Doctor Ross—LOVE—the GREAT PHYSICIAN—is the revelator of the latter.

Franklin Thompson, in the seeking of patients for his beloved PHYSICIAN, has travelled the UTTERMOST WAY, beholding in the habiliments of weary and world-worn wayfarers, the unbeautiful garments of human belief.

The Sixteenth Chapter reveals that all is not well within the home-living place, presenting the irremediable, MAN—Franklin Thompson—has deserted his bed therein, to become a patient in the Hospital of the New Birth. This has caused SERVICE—Dorothy Richardson—to lose much of her assurance, and renders possible the precepts of LOVE to prevail. At long last she has decided to accept, although not wholly believing it will correct that which she is beginning to doubt her ability to do alone, a union with LOVE.

In the Seventeenth Chapter, we witness the farewell of SERVICE to Optimism and Convention.

In the Eighteenth Chapter, we behold the marriage of LOVE and SERVICE.

In the Nineteenth Chapter, Hannah Thompson—the daughter of human relations, learns of the Doctor's marriage.

In the Twentieth Chapter, the mother of human relations gets a glimpse of the home-living place.

In the Twenty-first Chapter, our vision being restored, we behold the restoration of spiritual health, and MAN, safe and sound, leaves the HOSPITAL of the NEW BIRTH.

In the Twenty-second Chapter, MAN keeps an appointment with an old friend, the HAND of INTERPOSITION, the guest of a weary yesterday.

To one who made the writing
of this book possible

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The Success of Failure

CHAPTER I

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

In addition to the driving wind and the density of the night, a heavy rain was falling when the last train for the day pulled into the little station of Peterstown. Its only passenger, a man, alighted and made his way to where the station-agent was standing upon the platform, and immediately inquired of him where he could secure a conveyance to take him out to his shack, a distance of about three miles.

"I'm sorry, sir," informed the agent, "but I don't know of anyone who would be willing to hitch up and drive you out on such a night as this."

"Then, I shall have to walk," said the man, and he raised his hands and adjusted the collar of his coat more securely about his neck.

"Why not put up at the hotel for the night?" suggested the agent. "You will find little trouble in getting someone to drive you out in the morning."

"Thank you," said the man, stooping over to turn up his trousers at each ankle, "but I am determined to reach there tonight."

"We have had considerable rain and the roads, I hear, are far from good. I shouldn't advise you to try it," and the agent shook his head dissuasively, "for it wouldn't be any fun losing the road a night like this."

"I can quite believe it. Nevertheless, I shall make the attempt," and wishing the agent goodnight the man walked off into the darkness and lonesomeness of a country road.

When visiting the shack he rarely ever used the station of Peterstown, but got off at Woodside, a station two miles the opposite direction and a mile nearer the shack, and his only reason tonight for continuing on to Peterstown was to avoid the possible meeting of friends. However, he was sure he would have little trouble in keeping to the road, which, if he remembered rightly, after turning the corner, was straight and level for, perhaps, a mile, when it turned to the left and led over two long, steep hills, and then went off to the right into the woods. This part of the road, he recalled, was rough and little used excepting by those wishing to shorten their journey by a mile to the next town.

After an hour of stumbling and groping in the dark, he turned in at what was called the Woods' Road, and

an additional five minutes' walk brought him to the gate of the little pathway leading to the shack, or roughly built bungalow. Very tired from striving with the wind and wet from the heavy rain, he pushed open the gate and walked up the path and unlocked the door. Entering, he stood motionless for a number of seconds before striking a match, then carrying it he felt his way over to the mantel-piece on the side of the room opposite the door, where he found a candle-stick, in which was a small piece of candle. This he lit, and then walked back and closed the door.

The dim light disclosed a large room, in which could gradually be discerned a table in the center, a couch on the side away from the door to the left, a book-case to the right and under the mantel-piece a large fire-place, in which were laid logs of wood ready for lighting. On one side of the fire-place was a large arm-chair and on the other side a small rocking-chair. Standing near the door was a hat-rack, upon which our acquaintance, Mr. Franklin Thompson, hung his hat and coat. The room was evidently one which served two purposes, that of living-room and hall.

Franklin Thompson, or Frank, as we shall call him, after hanging up his hat and coat, drew a chair, hitherto not visible, from a dark corner of the room and placed it by the table. He seated himself upon it and took from the inside pocket of his coat a small

bottle which he stood upon the table. Regarding it intently, he said:

"This is a time when I shall not fail. There will be no more tomorrows to follow the nights, no more guessing, no more hoping and no more failing. This time I shall succeed."

Fifteen years ago he had promised himself this same thing—that he should not fail. Here, in this room of the little shack, he had said, and he had meant to do what he said, that he should succeed. If success was to be attained by hard work, honesty and truthfulness, he had stated emphatically that it should be his. And now he had come back to the old surroundings, to the home of his youth, a failure.

His gaze leaves the bottle and travels slowly and rests lingeringly upon the different objects of the nearly dark room. It then comes back to his folded arms resting upon the table, and his head slowly—very slowly—droops until it reaches the folded arms, and there remains while his thoughts go back over the past years. He is thinking of the disappointments, his many efforts and resultant failures, of the battles he has fought and lost. Could he have exchanged for the practices of the world the principles underlying right living which he had learned here, he would have succeeded. But, somehow, he could not bring himself to sell his manhood for a mess of pottage. For him to

attain success, other than by worthy means, was out of the question, and to have accepted it at any other price would have meant failure, although of a different kind, he well knew.

How very tired, how thoroughly wearied he is of this walking in the dark these many years! The one thing now he desires most is rest; to get away from Life's continual questioning, to go to sleep and never wake, to be able to forget and to be forgotten. No longer does he wish for another existence, and he cares nothing for its rewards nor its punishments.

So wholly absorbed in painful recollection is he, that he hears not a gentle and persistent knocking, nor is he aroused by the opening and closing of the door, and is totally oblivious to the sound of a woman's tired and faltering step and the trailing of her rain-soaked garments as she crosses the room. She is hatless and coatless and her hair, in wet disorder, hangs over her shoulders, and in the dim candle light her face looks wan and worn. At the sight of the man, seated beside the table, a sigh of relief and satisfaction escapes her, and sitting down upon the couch she watches intently the motionless figure upon the chair.

The candle is slowly burning out, and not a sound is heard, save for the rain pattering on the roof and the swishing of the rain-bathed branches of the trees outside.

An hour, or more, has passed, and she is still watching. Then, with a groan, he raises his head and puts out his hand for the bottle. His fingers close upon it and he proceeds to draw out the cork, still unmindful of the silent figure which now rises and moves quietly to his side. He raises the bottle to his lips and in a few moments what he has come here to do will have been done; but as he is about to pour its contents into his mouth, over his hand is laid that of his unknown and unbidden guest, and with authority she draws it down until his arm rests with the other upon the table, and the vial, released from the now trembling fingers, falls to the ground, spilling its contents.

The flickering candle sputters and goes out. It is the hour before dawn and all is in darkness. The rain has ceased, and all that can be heard is the sighing of the wind through the trees.

Surprised, and not a little alarmed, by this interference, Frank straightens up and peers into the blackness of the room, fully alive to the fact that he is not alone. Someone is here, but who? He is not by any means a coward, yet he is totally unable to control the trembling of his body. He is shaking from head to foot and is wholly incapable of commanding his voice. After making many vain attempts to speak, he is much relieved when the voice of the woman, low-toned and sweet, breaks the silence, and she says:

"You are greatly agitated; be quiet and do not try to talk. As briefly as possible I will explain my presence here. An important errand called me out tonight and I was caught in the storm. From the road I saw the feeble light of the candle shining through the window and, being unable to proceed further, I turned into the path leading to the door, upon which I knocked many times but received no answer. Encouraged by the silence within I opened the door and entered."

When she had finished speaking, Frank with a long, shuddering sigh settled back in his chair without uttering a word. Was he sorry, he questioned, that he had been prevented from carrying out the purpose of his visit to the shack? He did not know. Was he glad? He did not know. That he was still here, when he expected to be he knew not where, was evident. He shivered, and for the first time that night he began to feel the cold dampness of the room . My, but he was cold! Then he remembered his unbidden guest; she must be cold, also, for her clothes, like his, were rain-soaked.

Turning his head in the direction from which her voice had come, he said unsteadily:

"You, I am sure, must be suffering from the cold and dampness of the night."

"Yes," she replied, shivering, "I am cold."

Without saying another word, Frank stretched out

a much bestiffened leg and put his hand in a pocket of his trousers and brought out a box of matches. Striking one upon its side, he rose shakily to his feet and walking slowly carried it carefully over to the fireplace and applied it to the paper and loose bark that was under the wood. A bright blaze which lit up the room was the result, and he saw, seated upon the couch, a young woman about whose age one could not be certain. The face which she turned up to him was ghastly pale and infinitely sad. Her dress was wet, the bottom of her skirt lying in thick, heavy damp folds about her feet.

He turned away and walked over to the window and looked out. The storm was over and the morning light of another day was breaking through the clouds. The night had passed and the day from asleep was awakening. He stood there looking out, and a war of conflicting emotions raged within him. Something greater and stronger than he had hitherto known was slowly possessing him. It struggled and gasped, gasped and struggled, as it fought for supremacy. On and on, as the minutes passed, it strove, beating back and crushing out all resisting forces. It won. He no longer resisted; he submitted. As the strife ceased, he leaned his head wearily against the window frame, and there stole over him a commanding silence, bidding him be still, and for the first time in his life he rested.

Then there rose up within him a great longing to be and to do, and was as a man awakened from a long, long sleep, refreshed and strengthened.

It was daylight when Frank raised his head and again looked out of the window. The sun had raised his head from the soft pillow of gray and was bathing the sky with bright rays of golden red. The trees, unaffected by the storm, stood as proudly erect as ever, and the earth, clad in her mantle of green, looked marvelously fresh and young. Nature was singing her morning hymn in magnificent silence.

When Frank at last turned away from the window he found his guest of the night standing on the rug before the fire. He wondered how long she had been standing there. Chiding himself for his remissness, he stepped quickly over to the hat-rack and from behind it he drew a large folded reclining chair. This he opened and placed at a comfortable distance from the fire, and said:

"Won't you sit down here and rest?"

"Thank you," she replied, seating herself in the chair.

Picking up the poker Frank stirred up the burning logs of wood and then went out through a door which led into the kitchen, returning shortly carrying in his arms more logs. Three he placed upon the fire and the remaining two he laid upon the rug.

After replenishing the fire, Frank turned to his guest

and was about to ask her if she found the chair comfortable and if she felt at all rested, when, to his surprise, he found she had fallen asleep. It was now his turn to watch. Who could she be? he queried as he sat down in the arm-chair a short distance away. What errand could have taken her out so late at night in the storm?

As he sat there, his eyes travelled over her face and noted the broad, white forehead, from which the hair in a damp, dark mass fell back, the prettily curved eye-brows, the closed lids, the well-shaped nose, the mouth which was neither small nor large, and the firmly rounded chin. As she slept the lines of care left her face and into its paleness there crept a faint pink.

The sun had been up an hour and was pouring his warm rays through the window when she awoke. Frank had not stirred from his seat at the corner of the fire-place. Sitting up she regarded him out of a pair of dark-brown eyes with a look of mournful interrogation, and asked:

"How long have I been asleep?"

"About an hour," answered Frank, looking at his watch as he rose from his chair. "It is now six o'clock."

"It is late," she said, "and my work is not yet done."

"She stood up and her hair, with which the wind

and rain had played havoc, fell down her back in a tangled heap to her waist, and the pins which had held it to her head slipped out upon the floor. Stooping down she picked them up and with her hands smoothed out her hair, and coiling it pinned it securely to her head. Then looking out of the window, she remarked:

"What a difference the condition of the weather makes in our appreciation of the outside world. Last night, we, anxious to escape from the howling, driving wind and the pouring rain, thought only of a place of shelter. This morning, the sky is clear and the earth is basking in the warm rays of the sun. The storm is forgotten and nature is aglee."

"That is true of the country, I think," replied Frank, resuming his seat, "but in the large cities with their many conveniences I am not so sure that it really makes so much difference. By that, I do not mean to say that a clear sky is not preferable to clouds nor that one would not choose, if he could, fair instead of foul weather. But—take transportation, for instance—there are so many ways of being conveyed about a large city. For the wealthy and the not so wealthy there are the automobiles. For the ordinary working-class there are the subways, the elevated, surface cars and bus lines. So you see, in that way, the state of the weather does not materially affect city people."

"Why do you say 'the ordinary working-class'?" she asked, regarding Frank curiously. "I have been taught to regard all human beings as extraordinary."

"Evidently the knowledge imparted to you by your teachers was not acquired in a large city with an excess population of working people," said Frank, laughing, "or you would readily understand why I use that phrase."

"What makes them ordinary?" she asked, sitting down in her chair.

"Well, I don't know, but I suppose one would say their position in life."

Slowly raising her eyes she regarded him wonderingly, and said:

"Life is an unbidden guest and knows no degree, and with it is endowed every member of the human family. Its source may only be found in the Greater Life. How then can members belonging to that family have different positions in life? There is only the one."

"They have, just the same," stubbornly replied Frank. "And bitter is the war waged between individuals for those positions."

"Is not that a singular situation, the fighting of humanity against itself?" she asked wonderingly.

"Humanity does not regard it as such."

"Is the result of the warfare satisfactory?"

"Taking it as a whole, I am sorry to say, it is not.

The weak are forced to give place to the strong, dropping out, one by one, from the ranks, and little, if anything, is known of them thereafter. The strong who take their place in time become weak and are, in turn, replaced by others more vigorous. And so it goes on, this ever endless strife between the weak and the strong."

"It is a case of the 'house divided against itself,' is it not?"

"If you mean that man is arrayed against man," replied Frank with a shrug of his shoulders, "it certainly is, although I have never thought of it in just that way."

"Then to prevent the downfall of the house, the cause for the now existing divisions must be removed and the cementation of the true interests of man take place. That is, to secure his own good man must look to the good of his brother-man."

"You have little knowledge of the world," said Frank with an indulgent smile, "or you would know that there man secures his own good at the expense of that of his brother-man. Some man always pays the price."

"Such knowledge is worthless, for it is not possible for man to sow evil and reap good nor to sow good and reap evil nor to take that for which no adequate return can be given."

"By that you mean man must pay with good for any good he gets."

"I do," she replied emphatically.

"I am afraid the men and women of the world with whom I am acquainted would not agree with you," replied Frank laughing.

"That would not be wonderful, would it?" asked she smiling. "They do not agree with themselves." And getting up from her chair she walked over to the window and looked out.

Frank laughed, and getting to his feet joined her at the window.

"The perversion of humanity is remarkable," she continued. "One does not find it so in the vegetable world. Look at that tree with its bark-covered enormous trunk and its strong spreading branches decked with their beautiful green leaves. See how erectly it stands as though health and strength were to be its heritage for years and years to come. The elements necessary for its preservation are evidently working in harmony, and any attack must come from a foreign foe. Supposing, however, one of the elements should decide that it needed a certain proportion of another element and should enter into conflict for its possession and it should succeed in separating the component part and attaching it to itself, it would only impoverish the other element and lessen its possibili-

ties and add to itself that of which it had no need and which would eventually perish for the lack of the proper environment to perform its pre-ordained function. At first, possibly, the absence would not be perceptible, but as time went on the constant draining would be felt by the remaining elements and they would gradually become incapacitated, and the end of the tree would be death. So it must be with the social tree of man's planting, whose roots are sunk in the soil of self and whose elements are constantly warring against each other."

"You are not so ignorant of the world and its doings as I thought," replied Frank with a smile.

"I am well acquainted with that tree," she answered sadly. "Its great bare trunk is o'erspread with scars and its gigantic outstretched limbs touch with their shadows many lands. The branches at the top with their ceaseless tossing, stirred by the winds from the Land of More, keep those underneath constantly moving and cause the fluttering of their leaves in the breeze from the Isle of Want. Right below these are the branches whose leaves are blown hither and thither by a gale from the Ocean of Need, and hidden beneath are the timid and frail stems with their tiny blighted leaves. Nearly at the bottom are huge limbs covered with leaves turning yellow, vainly struggling against the gusts of wind from the River of Greed, only to be

carried off, again and again, to the City of Nowhere. At the bottom the branches are withered and old and reach out their long gaunt arms over the Province of Death."

"And yet," said Frank thoughtfully, "it is a tree in which, rightly or wrongly, the interests of man are centered and his life is sustained by its fruits."

"Are its fruits satisfying?"

"I cannot say that they are altogether so," gloomily responded Frank.

"In what do they lack?"

"Much. They fail to produce unity or to meet the aspirations of man."

"In other words, their life sustaining qualities are those of discord and dissatisfaction."

"That is the result of my experience and observation."

The face which she turned up to him looked wan and gray and her eyes were swimming in unshed tears as she asked:

"How long will man continue to partake of its fruits, fruits which are so barren of good and which cannot truly benefit anyone?"

"You are tired. Come back to your chair," said Frank sympathetically, turning and leading the way.

"My weariness is nothing unusual," she replied as she followed him and sank wearily down into her

chair. "Indeed, I am often very, very weary," and sighing she leaned her head back and gazed sadly into the fire.

Frank turned over with the poker what remained in the grate of the burning logs and added those which were lying on the rug. He then sat down in the rocking-chair at the corner of the fire-place, and looking smilingly at her, said gently:

"Why worry about this tree which has existed long before our entrance upon the scene of its activities and which will continue to exist long after we have ceased to be leaves upon its branches, for, grieve as we will and labor as we must, we cannot change it nor stop its growth."

"That is the never-ceasing monotonous song which the leaves sing as they swing backwards and forwards upon its branches," she said a trifle impatiently. "It is a dismal song and one in which all of its notes disagree."

"Why weep, then, over what cannot be helped?" asked Frank smiling. "We cannot remove the singers nor alter the song."

"But is that true?" she asked, sitting upright in her chair. "If so, it would indeed be foolish to sorrow over that that admits of no remedy. But is it not possible for man to live without lodging in its branches, without partaking of its fruits or of singing its song?

Is not the planting of his own tree given to every man? Does not the decision of the soil in which it shall grow rest with him, whether it shall be that of service or that of self in which its roots shall grow and spread out? Can he not decide whether his tree shall be husbanded by his own efforts rather than by those of another? Is it not his right to say whether its branches shall be abiding places, and the fruit growing thereupon be life sustaining?"

"You are an idealist, I see," said Frank, with an amused smile. "Such conditions as you portray might be possible where men and women do not have to battle for their bread and butter; but down here, in this world, where man has to give himself that his body may live, it is, I assure you, a different matter."

"What is an idealist?" she queried perplexedly.

"The world's definition of an idealist is, I think," said Frank slowly, "a person who sees life as it should be and not as it is."

"That seems rather contradictory, does it not? For if a physician be ignorant of a disease and the reason of its existence, what assurance has the afflicted patient that his prescriptions will be remedial?"

"The world has many just such physicians, however, who, without a proper understanding of conditions, constantly prescribe remedies whose application they believe would greatly lessen, if not wholly remove, the

innumerable disorders with which society is struggling; and their lack of efficacy they attribute to the fact that the majority of people, if not totally negligent, do not altogether depend upon their rigid application to allay their ills, but prefer, somewhat, to rely upon home-made remedies."

"And is not the home-made remedy the only one upon which we can safely rely to find the true source of health?" she asked. "For if we are to have a perfect We, we must have a perfect I."

"Oh, I see," said Frank, with a light laugh, "you are not only an idealist but an individualist as well."

"If by that big word you mean," she replied smiling, "that good and bad start with the individual but cannot exist at the same time and the effect of their operations is decidedly distinct and separate, then I am an individualist."

"By that you would say, I suppose," said Frank, taking up the poker and turning over the unburnt side of the logs until they rested upon the burning red coals, society is no stronger than its weakest member and no better than its worst."

"Society is a unit and admits of no classification. It has but one source, one gate of entrance and one of departure. But enough of this for the present: I must leave you shortly and my message is to you."

"To me!" exclaimed Frank, much surprised.

"Yes, to you," she replied gently.

"What message can you possibly have to give me?" he asked doubtingly. "I was not aware that any of my acquaintances knew of my intention to leave the city, nor my purpose of leaving."

"It was not known to an acquaintance," she said quietly; "it was known to a friend."

"A friend," repeated he, his forehead drawing together in puzzled lines. "You are surely mistaken, for I can assure you there is no one to whom my coming and going would be of interest nor to whom my living or dying would make a difference. The only person who would have cared is gone, and her body lies out there in the woods and rests amidst the wild flowers which she loved. That one was my mother. She and I made this little shack our home for many years, and when she died and went away I found the little place too lonesome, so I went into the city and engaged apartments. However, it was lonely there, too, for acquaintances one might make, but friends, never."

"I know," she replied sympathetically. "Nevertheless, the author of the message which I bring you is a friend."

"His name?"

"The message I may give you, but the name of the

sender the coming years of your life upon earth must disclose," she replied.

"What is the message, then?"

"This is the message," she replied, and slowly recited the following lines:

"Success is the heritage of every man and awaits him who rightly seeks. But why seek to pluck its fair flowers in groves where only the weeds of failure grow, which appear from a distance so beautiful in their rosy-hue and so greatly to be desired, but which, upon possession, stain with their redness all that they touch. Their leaves are full of holes, through which filter tiny streams of human tears, and at their roots lie the decayed hopes and aspirations of man."

Frank, much perplexed, listened attentively to the recital of the message. At its completion, he said:

"What is its meaning and in what way does it apply to me?"

"Its meaning is, I should say," she replied, "one should not seek to purchase with the world's coinage that which it cannot buy——"

"Would you have me infer," indignantly interrupted Frank, "that I was other than honest and truthful in my efforts to attain success? Had I been so, the failures and disappointments would have hurt me less.

It was because of my inability to reconcile conditions that I lost hope and love of life. I could not understand why fifteen years of patient, honest effort should result in fifteen years of fruitless effort; that I should not be materially any better off in the end of that time than I was in the beginning, and that for my labor I had nothing to show but a pair of well-worn, empty hands. The uselessness of the struggle oppressed me, and I decided to open the door and go out. I had no desire for a future existence and longed for annihilation."

"Nor to proffer," continued she, "in exchange for world-called success, a coinage which the world is slow to recognize and fails to make its own."

"That sounds remarkably well," impatiently replied Frank, "but is not to succeed the ambition of every normal man?"

"Yes," she answered with a strange smile. "But man, as the world knows him, is not normal. He is abnormal, and all that he does must partake of that abnormality, which accounts for the bewildering fact that he ascribes his abnormality to the abnormalities of conditions, when just the opposite is the truth. No words prescribe a remedy more fully than these: 'Ye must be born again.'"

As she quoted the last five words, Frank, somewhat irritated and thoroughly mystified, rose from his chair

and walked to the door, opened it and looked out. Standing there in the doorway with the cool breeze blowing his hair back from his forehead, he mentally explored every rememberable nook and cranny of his past to locate, if possible, some incident which would enlighten the present situation. That he had never heretofore met this woman, to whose interfering hand he owed his life, he was positive. Why was she here and from whom had she obtained the information of his morbid intention upon his arrival at the shack? Why had she brought to him such a message, the purport of which he could not perceive? Try as he would, he could not recall a single instance which, in any way, could account for her presence. Baffled, he abandoned the search, trusting that she, voluntarily or inadvertently, would disclose her identity and explain away the disquieting circumstances. Turning, he came in and closed the door and again took his seat in the rocking-chair. She was lying quietly back in her chair gazing dreamily into the fire, and evidently her thoughts were far away, for neither by word nor sign did she intimate she was aware of his presence as he sat down. Not a sound broke the stillness of the room for several minutes, then, with a gentle sigh, she straightened up and regarded him inquiringly.

"Of what are you thinking?" she smilingly asked.

"I am thinking of you," he replied moodily.

"Thinking of me," she repeated. "So, at last, you are thinking of me."

"Yes, I am thinking of you. I am wondering who you are, where you came from and why you are here."

"I regret the only explanation I am able to give of myself, instead of lessening, would greatly increase your wonderment," she said musingly. "However, I am glad to know that the who, where and why of my existence is to you no longer a matter of indifference."

"Tell me, anyway," he pleaded.

"A friend to everybody, am I," she replied gravely, "and my dwelling-place is everywhere. To me is given the opening and the closing of the door to which all come, early or late, who have sought to learn spiritual truths at a material school."

Frank responded with a helpless shake of his head and sigh of incomprehension.

"The crossing of the threshold of this door by man's own hand is an uncertain venture," continued she. "Man may force life out of his body, but that does not mean he will be relieved from responsibility; does not assure him of any better conditions; does not guarantee freedom from his troubles, nor the cessation of the agonizing memories of his mind. He may destroy the temple, but the intelligent control is independent of temples. Whence it comes and whither it goes no

man can tell. He knows it exists, and he exists because of it. Of the forces that are at work in the world to which he would, when life here becomes to him intolerable, so recklessly and ignorantly thrust himself, he has no knowledge. He has no proof that he shall be immune from suffering, nor that the taking-off of one dress may not mean the putting-on of another, and that the getting rid of the self he took with him may not be a more difficult task than he believed."

"What, then, is man to do with this life, this indestructible thing with which he is endowed?" asked Frank despairingly. "Is he always to be a thing of burdens and strife? Is he never to know, in the course of his day, the where of his being and the why of his way?"

"Man is slow to learn the purpose of life," she replied with a sad shake of her head. "He has made of it an intricate problem, and one which he is unable to solve."

"And is it not, too, an intricate problem to you?"

"Life, to me, is a wonderful thing, with its story untold. It is the one thing which cannot be bought nor cannot be sold, and is to every man a gift so precious, could he but learn its truths and know its purpose."

"Life, if not a curse, is considered everything else but a precious gift by a great many people," gloomily responded Frank; "for well do they know what its

meaning shall be to them in their declining days, should they live; and that is an inability to work and a dreaded poverty-stricken old age. In large cities such instances are not rare, and it is not surprising that people should regard life as a regrettable thing, something with which they would have dispensed had they been consulted, when they are so frequently confronted with the realistic and ever depressing pictures of aged men and women, whose years of labor have left them naught but a quavering voice, trembling hands and an uncertain step, eating the bread of charity. As they view the pictures, they are painfully aware that only a few short years stand between them and frames from which their faces may look out; for, labor as they will and deprive themselves of the present necessities as they feel they must to provide for future demands, the fruit of their labor, at times, barely suffices to meet their daily needs. Indeed, they feel they are paying a big price for the privilege of living."

"The world, I see, has no use for the falling leaves," she said, "and endeavors to forget they were once the buds of spring. Their beauty being gone and their usefulness at an end, they are permitted to lie where they have fallen and to be trodden under foot, or, if the cool winds of autumn do not bear them to a kindlier country, they are raked up into a pile and forgotten."

"That is the situation, exactly."

"And what has life meant to you?" she asked smiling.

"Life," replied Frank, with a doleful shake of his head, "has meant but one thing to me."

"And what was that one thing?"

"An everlasting struggle to get nowhere."

"When you started out, you meant to get somewhere and be somebody, didn't you?" asked she, regarding Frank with her big brown eyes.

"I meant to succeed."

"And you did not?"

"No," grimly acknowledged Frank, "I failed."

"Why did you fail? Was it the result of the seeking?"

"I don't know what you mean," replied Frank, losing his temper as he always did when he thought his business integrity was questioned. "I sought earnestly, honestly and faithfully to succeed, and there, I can assure you, were no questionable methods in my seeking."

"Every life has its own shadow and reflects what it seeks," she replied. "The conditions under which man labors are the products of his own seeking. He is forever striving for the shadow when he might have the substance. Things of account he deems of no-account, and at the feet of those of no-account he lays the best the world has to give, himself. To his dead gods he sacrifices himself daily."

"I must say," impatiently replied Frank, "it is all beyond me."

"It is so now and it has been so in the past, but in the future it shall not be so," she replied, and her voice rang with authority, which immediately silenced Frank and claimed his attention. "You are," she went on, "to learn of me. I shall teach you to know the things that are from the things that are not and to discern the riches that lie in poverty and the poverty that lies in riches. Through me you shall sift the chaff of seeming until you find the grain of meaning. No more will the thought of self-destruction possess you, for you will know that life to you is a precious gift, something neither to be abused nor to be abased, but to be understood. Your residence, choice and place of labor you may select, but from me you are to learn all the lessons of life."

She finished speaking and rose from her chair. Frank sat staring at her in speechless amazement, and it was not until her hand was laid upon the handle of the door leading to the little path which led to the road that he found his voice sufficiently to stammer out:

"It—is—incredible——"

"You think so now," interrupted she, "but as the years go by your present belief will not only become incredible, but an impossibility."

She opened the door and stood in the doorway.

Frank joined her and for several seconds they silently looked off into the wooded distance. She was the first to speak, and said hurriedly:

"I must not remain longer, for I am needed elsewhere."

She stepped down into the little path and had reached the road before Frank recalled she had not told him her name. Hastening after her, he said:

"You have not told me your name."

"The world calls me, Failure," she said, smiling sadly; "but my name you shall decide when you see me again."

Frank stood and watched her, his mind distraught with many perplexing questions, as she went down the Woods' Road. Soon her erect figure was lost to view among the trees and heavy foliage; and he, vainly endeavoring to unravel the snarled events of the past few hours, went back to the shack.

CHAPTER II

TWO DOCTORS AND A NURSE

"It will never do," said Doctor Gordon to Doctor Ross, "to attempt to curtail her activities. However, the proposition which she submitted for my consideration last Monday I hardly believe will meet with your approval."

"No, what was it?"

"She proposes to establish an institution which she believes will eventually banish the ills of man."

"You did not encourage her in any such nonsense, I hope," said Doctor Ross sternly. "She would only succeed in making herself ridiculous. She hasn't an idea what it would mean, and I shall use all the arguments of which I am capable to dissuade her from attempting anything of the kind."

"That is how you would feel, I knew," replied Doctor Gordon. "At first, I felt very much the same way about it. But, upon reflection, I am not so sure that it might not be, after all, a rather good thing. At any rate, the arguments she advanced in favor of the arrangement were very convincing."

"I cannot think of any that would reconcile me to anything so impossible for her," replied Doctor Ross.

"She urged, for one thing—the truth of which is evident—the necessity for the expansion of her activities."

"Of course, you did not fail to remind her, Gordon, of the consequences of her past activities."

"You may be sure I did not, but she only laughed and bade me forget, as she was trying to do, the ill-effects of her past activities. She appeared to be very anxious to obtain my approval of the plan and to induce me, by persuasive argument, to admit it was a good one. I told her I preferred, before endorsing or further discussing its merits or demerits, to talk it over with you. I suggested, too, that she might personally submit for your consideration and endorsement the reasons why she believed such an arrangement would be to her of great benefit."

"Did she agree to do that?"

"She did. Although, she said, she knew it would not be of any use, for you would never approve of such a venture."

"And she is right there," replied Doctor Ross decidedly.

"You think, then, it is entirely out of the question?" queried Doctor Gordon. "Well, perhaps it is."

"It certainly is," emphatically replied Doctor Ross.

"What possible reason she can give for the further expansion of her activities, I am curious to know."

"Supposing we go over there, then, this afternoon," suggested Doctor Gordon.

"All right, if it is convenient for you," agreed Doctor Ross.

"Will four o'clock suit you?" inquired Doctor Gordon.

"Make it four-thirty. I am due at the hospital at two and do not leave before four."

"Very well, I shall telephone her she may expect us at four-thirty," said Doctor Gordon.

"Shall I call for you or will you call for me at the hospital?" asked Doctor Ross.

"I haven't many calls this afternoon, so I will call for you."

"I'll give John the afternoon off, then," said Doctor Ross. "It will be the first one he has had in a month."

"He will have no objections, such being the case, if you make use of my automobile this afternoon," said Doctor Gordon smiling, and he stood up and took his coat and hat from a stand close by him.

"What's your hurry?" asked Doctor Ross. "Stay and take luncheon with me."

"I should like to, but I can't. My days of semi-detached bachelorhood are ended for this year."

"What, is Margaret back?"

"Yes, and what's more, she made me promise to bring you back to luncheon with me. So get your coat and hat and come along."

"I'll have to call up the garage, first," said Doctor Ross.

"What is the use of calling up the garage, now?" asked Doctor Gordon. "John won't be there."

"That's so," admitted Doctor Ross, going over to the washbowl and turning on the cold and hot water faucets, "he goes to lunch between twelve and one, and," looking at his watch, "it is now half-past twelve. I could leave a message, I suppose," he continued, turning off the water and pulling up his shirt sleeves preparatory to washing his hands, "only he never takes an order from anyone but me, and——"

"At one forty-five," supplemented Doctor Gordon, "he would be found seated in the machine in front of the door waiting for orders."

"That's just it," assented Doctor Ross, replacing his white linen coat with one of blue serge, "John does not believe in taking chances."

"Well, I am afraid," said Doctor Gordon, stepping toward the door, "if you don't hurry we will run a chance of getting a good, warm meal and a pleasant reception from Margaret."

"I'll be with you in just a moment," said Doctor Ross, reaching for his hat. "But I must speak to Mrs.

Archer first," and he pressed a button at the side of his desk, which summoned from an inner office a young woman attired in the white uniform of a nurse. She acknowledged with a smile and a graceful inclination of her head Doctor Gordon's pleasant greeting, and then looked inquiringly at her employer.

"Mrs. Archer," said he, "kindly inform Mrs. Barstow I shall not be in for luncheon."

"Very well, doctor," she replied.

As they were going out of the front-door, he turned and said:

"I shall not be in before six; you may have Ronald over, if you wish."

"Thank you, doctor. You are very good," she said, following them to close the door. As they took their seats in the automobile they raised their hats and, as she closed the door, a happy laugh came from her lips at the thought of spending the afternoon with her boy, and she ran down the basement stairs to the dining-room.

After conveying the doctor's message to the waitress, Mrs. Archer greeted with a cheery nod and smile the other diners at the table, two young men and three young women, who were discussing in a somewhat animated manner women's suffrage. Not wishing to be drawn into the conversation, she picked up a medical journal lying by her plate and tore off the wrapper, and

in a very few moments was, apparently, absorbed in the perusal of its pages.

Sitting there, dressed in her white uniform, she made rather an attractive picture. Her hair, a light-brown, was loosely taken back and held in neat braids firmly to the back of her head with long, bone hair-pins. Her gray-blue eyes, surmounted by a broad, low forehead, were particularly serious in their expression; her nose, indicative of her ancestry, turned up slightly, and her mouth, set above a somewhat pointed chin, was large. Her skin, though fair, lacked the rosiness attributed to the children of Erin.

As the meal advanced, the other persons seated at the table, one by one, arose and left the dining-room, and Mrs. Archer was left alone. Throwing the journal, which she was pretending to read, to one side, she pushed back her plate and hastily drank the mouthful of coffee remaining in her cup and hurried upstairs. There were a number of things she had to do before she could summon Martha by telephone to bring Ronald over, and she wanted to spend as much time with him as she possibly could, for it was not often, now, they spent an afternoon together. Her hurrying feet had barely reached the top step of the stairs when the telephone-bell rang. She took down the receiver and held it to her ear and, in response to her gentle "Hallo?" the voice of Doctor Ross said:

"Mrs. Archer?"

"Yes, doctor."

"Tell John, when he comes around, I telephoned you he might have the afternoon off and that I shall not need the car before eight o'clock to-night."

"Very well, doctor," she replied a trifle reluctantly. "But you know how John objects to taking orders from anyone but you."

"I know," he answered; "but he was not to be found at the garage when I called up a few moments ago."

"I'll tell him, then."

"By the way," he continued, "if you do not object, try and prevail upon him to take Ronald for a little spin."

"You are very kind, doctor," she said, very much pleased. "That will be splendid, he gets out so little."

"That's what I thought," he replied. "Goodby."

She answered back, "Goodby," and hung up the receiver.

Glancing at the clock, she found it was now fifteen minutes past one. In half-an-hour John would be around. She must telephone Martha at once to get Ronald ready and bring him right over. John, of course, could call for him, but, motherlike, she wanted to assure herself that he was sufficiently wrapped before going for his ride. She again took down the

receiver and gave the number, and almost immediately a voice in response, said: "Creighton."

"Kindly," she requested, "connect me with apartment twenty-six."

There was a faint buzzing, and then Martha's voice, asking, "Who is it?"

"It is I, Martha. Get Ronald ready as quickly as you can and bring him over to the office. John is going to take him out for a ride in the doctor's automobile."

"Won't that be fine!" delightedly exclaimed Martha.

"It will, indeed. Let me speak to him."

Very soon, the gentle voice of a child came over the wire, saying, "Hallo, mamma!"

"Hallo, darling," she replied. "Hurry up and let Martha dress you, for you are to spend the afternoon with your mother."

She could hear the childish exclamation of delight, the merry laugh and the clapping of tiny hands as Martha lifted him down from the stool.

"Goodby, little son," she murmured fondly, as she hung up the receiver and went back to her work in the inner office.

The last bottle had been put back in its place and the last instrument cleaned and put away when John, seated in the car, stopped in front of the door. He

glanced neither to the right nor to the left but looked straight ahead. To get his attention, she walked to the window and rapped gently on the pane. He did not turn his head, and thinking, perhaps, he had not heard, she rapped louder, but without effect, for he still continued to retain his dignified attitude. Fearful of attracting the unwelcome notice of others if she kept on rapping, she left the window and went into the hall and, opening the street-door, called softly, "John," but he either could not, or would not, hear. Indignant at being compelled to appear in the street in her uniform, she ran down the steps and in no gentle tone of voice demanded of John what he meant by sitting in the automobile ignoring her raps on the window-pane and her call from the door?

Without turning his head John said with respectful emphasis, "I heard you rap and I heard you call, but I take no raps and I take no calls from anyone but from the person whose servant I am."

"Nevertheless," replied Mrs. Archer, striving to control her impatience, "I, too, must obey orders. Doctor Ross telephoned me nearly an hour ago that he would not need the car before eight o'clock tonight and that you might have the afternoon off, but——"

"I take no messages, I tell you," interrupted John, "from anyone but my master."

"He also said, before taking the automobile back to

the garage, you should take Ronald out for a short ride," continued she.

"No man, woman or child," replied John decisively, "puts a foot in this car unless my master, himself, orders me to let them do so."

"Very well," retorted Mrs. Archer haughtily, "I shall report your behaviour to the doctor when he returns at six."

John did not deign to reply, and Mrs. Archer, her throat contracting and her eyes filling with tears, retraced her steps. Had she not fully realized the futility of attempting to urge John to carry out his master's instructions when they were not delivered to him personally, she would have tried to prevail upon him to give Ronald his ride. She knew it would be useless and the doctor, when he arrived home that night at six o'clock, would find him sitting motionless, waiting for orders, out there in the car. She was sorry, now, she had mentioned the ride to Martha and prayed fervently that she had not said anything about it to Ronald, knowing how disappointed he would be. He was not like other children, this little son of hers, for so many of the games and amusements belonging to their world had no part in his. Little Ronald was blind. The occasional afternoons spent with his mother, his daily walk with Martha in the park or a

trip with her on the cars were regarded by him with wonder and delight.

Mrs. Archer adored this boy of hers and he, in turn, worshipped his mother; and although the little chap could not see her, she examined her face critically before the mirror in the hall. She straightened her cap, which the wind had set awry, smoothed back the few straying strands of hair and wiped her tear-filled eyes. All traces of tears, she decided, must be at once removed, or his tiny hands—with their tender, lingering touch—in their passing over her face would surely find them. So she passed quickly into the office and, turning the cold water faucet, permitted the water to flow until the bowl was a little more than half-full. Then she bathed her face in it, after which she patted it dry with a soft towel. The bell rang as she hung up the towel, and she ran to the door and threw it open, and into her arms she gathered her one great possession, her boy. She dismissed Martha and told her to call for him at five o'clock. Then she closed the door and carried Ronald into the inner office and sank with him into a large, comfortable arm-chair. As she proceeded to remove his outer garments, he laid his little hands protestingly upon hers and, in his quaint, old-fashioned way, asked:

"Am I not going out for a ride with John in the doctor's 'aunobile,' mother?"

"Not this afternoon, darling," replied Mrs. Archer, releasing her hands and taking off his hat and kissing the top of his curly head.

"Why not, mother?" asked the child, raising a quivering little face to hers. "Mart'a—said—you—told—her—John—was—going—to—take—me—for—a ride——"

"So mother thought, dear, but John says he cannot do it," answered his mother, stifling a sigh as she stood him down by her side and took off his coat which, with his hat and gloves, she laid on a chair nearby.

"Why can't he, mother?" wailed the child, as he climbed back into her lap and put two little, frail arms about her neck and laid a wet cheek against hers.

"Mother does not know just why," replied she, raising the tear-stained face and kissing it tenderly. "John has queer notions about some things."

Nothing more was said for several minutes. Ronald, his face buried in his mother's neck, was perfectly still; and save for the passing of her hand over his hair, in the soothing fashion mothers have, Mrs. Archer was as motionless. This little chap's sorrow and, likewise, his joys were all hers, and she felt keenly his failure to realize the pleasure of the anticipated ride. However, she was not going to permit it to mar his whole afternoon, so, turning her head, she said playfully in his ear:

"Come now, honey, you are not going to let your disappointment spoil your afternoon with mother, are you?"

Ronald responded by straightening up and withdrawing his arms from around her neck. The doleful face, with its sightless, blue eyes, brightened, and the mouth, with its trembling lips, extended into a quivering smile. Lovingly his little hands, with their delicate touch, passed over her face, and, apparently, he was satisfied with what he found there for, as he left a birdlike kiss upon her lips, he said:

"You are very bootiful, mother."

"Mother is glad you think so, little son," she fondly responded. "But what shall I do to amuse you this afternoon?"

"Tell me a story, mother," he replied, nestling down in her arms. "Tell me about the bootiful things which I cannot see, the big trees and the pretty flowers—— You know, everything."

His mother drew him closer to her and laid his light-brown, curly head against her breast. Then she proceeded with her story and, childlike, in the telling his disappointment was forgotten.

CHAPTER III

THE DOCTORS CALL UPON DOROTHY

PROMPTLY at four o'clock Doctor Gordon, seated in his automobile, arrived at the hospital. Five minutes later Doctor Ross took a seat beside him, and the car, joining the dense traffic of countless automobiles, cabs, trucks and numerous other vehicles of every kind and description, began to slowly wend its way westward.

It would be difficult for an observer watching the two men as they sat conversing to determine from their appearance the difference, if any, in their ages. Douglas Gordon possessed the face of the optimist. The merry blue eyes, set well back under heavy dark eyebrows and o'er-topped by a forehead of extraordinary height and breadth, looked out brightly and hopefully upon everybody and everything. The mouth, above which was a large and decidedly prominent nose, was exceedingly pleasing in its expression, and disclosed, when smiling, an excellent set of strong, white teeth. The chin was inclined to be square, and was really the only severe looking thing about the face. The skin

had the healthy color which is attributed to those who spend the greater part of their time out in the open air, and his great head, supported by a rather substantial neck, was thickly covered with reddish-brown hair. In height and weight he was slightly above the average, and his years were forty, some years older than his brother-in-law, Doctor Ross, but there were few who could be made to believe it.

In appearance Robert Ross was decidedly unlike his brother-in-law, and he viewed the world, its doings and its people from a somewhat different standpoint. He was tall and slender and his shoulders, unlike Doctor Gordon's, stooped slightly forward. His face, with its high cheek bones, was thin and long, and the pale, dark skin which covered it did not suggest robustness The eyes, set wide apart under heavy black eye-brows, were big and black, and gave the rather disquieting impression when their gloomy, speculative gaze was directed at one that not only were they inspecting the physical defect, or defects, but the moral ones were being scrutinized and mentally passed upon, also. The forehead was high and receding, and the finely-shaped head was covered with thick, black hair, through which a white one could be seen here and there. The nose was long, but well-formed, and the largeness of the mouth was redeemed by the pleasant, if a trifle serious, smile which it wore when its owner greeted an ac-

quaintance or friend. The firm, square chin indicated its possessor might be depended upon to perform anything which he deemed it worth while to undertake.

Doctor Gordon, whose sunny nature so endeared him to his patients and fellow-practitioners, had an unfaltering faith in the inherent good of humanity and in the final elimination of its ever-appearing evils, and believed the social leavening elements of society would eventually produce conditions wholly conducive to the well-being of mankind. In this respect he differed greatly from his brother-in-law, for Doctor Ross had little, if any, faith in human-kind, and regarded society as a rather uncertain structure. He had scant patience with people who lived in the past or dreamed of the future. It was the things of today, and not those of yesterday or tomorrow, which interested him, and he did not believe in waiting for future remedies to correct present ills.

Despite the dissimilarity, however, the friendship existing between the two men was no common one, and there was little in the life of one which did not interest the other.

When the car left the street and turned into the avenue, Doctor Ross, having finished stating, in response to Doctor Gordon's inquiry, the number of patients who had applied at the clinic that afternoon for treatment and citing some of the interesting cases,

lapsed into silence and gazed gloomily off up the crowded avenue. His brother-in-law was well acquainted with his quiet moods and knew it would be futile to introduce any new topic of conversation, so leaving him to his thoughts he sat silently looking out, noting and mentally commenting upon the numerous objects of interest as they passed, and giving an occasional glance at the varying faces of the hurrying crowds of people passing and repassing each other on their way north and south. In less than half-an-hour the automobile drew up in front of a large, red-brick building.

"Here we are. Wake up, Ross," said Doctor Gordon, rising and stepping out upon the sidewalk.

"So I see," replied Doctor Ross, getting slowly up and following Doctor Gordon through the entrance of the "Bentley Apartments." They ascended in the elevator to the fourth floor, where they alighted, and a few short steps brought them to the door of the apartment on the right. In response to the ring of the bell, a little lady, attired neatly in black, stood in the doorway. White linen, hemstitched bands, which covered the collar and cuffs of her gown, slightly relieved its somberness. Smiling brightly in greeting, she stretched out a hand to each and drew them in and closed the door.

As she led the way to the small, but cozily furnished

sitting-room, she asked, smiling mischievously up at Doctor Ross, "Have you come up to scold me, Bob?"

"Hardly that, Dorothy," he replied, looking down into the twinkling, brown eyes with his grave, black ones. "I have come up to try and dissuade you, if I can, from attempting anything like a boarding-house."

"But it isn't going to be a boarding-house, Bob!"

"What is it going to be, then?" he asked, placing his hat on the table and seating himself beside her on the couch.

"A home," she replied emphatically.

"What do you mean by a home, Dorothy?" asked Doctor Gordon, sinking into the commodious, leather-cushioned arm-chair by the window.

"I mean, Douglas," she replied smiling, "a home-living place."

"It is possible, Dorothy," said Doctor Ross, regarding his shoes intently, "in the establishing of this 'home-living-place' to unknowingly eliminate all that may mean a home."

It is so like you to think of that, Bob," replied she, laying a small, white hand upon his shoulder.

"And that is something well worth your consideration, Dorothy," said Doctor Gordon. "However, go ahead and tell Bob just what you wish to do."

"I propose," she replied, wrinkling up her smooth, white forehead, "to make conditions livable for all.

Some of the children of men have too much, others too little, and for that reason I intend to make a more even distribution. To do this, I shall introduce my idea of the 'home-living place' and the great need of its furtherance, and shall encourage all who will to make their home with me. Applicants, of course, will be expected to furnish references as to their good faith."

"References! What is the good of references!" impatiently demanded Doctor Ross. "They are not always to be depended upon; nor can they always be accepted as a guarantee of the individual's honesty of purpose. You'll want something more than references, Dorothy, to make this venture a success."

"And what is the essential 'something,' Bob?"

"A greater knowledge of the world and the needs of its people," he replied, smiling slightly, "of which, although you won't admit it, you are wofully ignorant."

"Do you think so, Bob?" she asked teasingly. "Sometimes I wonder if that is not true of you."

"It could hardly be possible, could it, considering my profession?"

"I don't know," she replied dubiously. "Anyway, I think you are a bit mistaken in believing that I am so deplorably ignorant."

"You have a bowing-acquaintance, Dorothy, but I am positive you have not a visiting one with the world," replied the doctor.

"Oh, I don't know, Bob," she replied laughing, "in the years spent traveling around this old globe I picked up a little knowledge and became somewhat worldly-wise."

"True, you have traveled and visited many foreign countries and rubbed elbows with their strange children, but you have never given, I am sure, any serious consideration to the conditions under which they live."

"That is true, Bob," acquiesced she. "And for that very reason I think my proposed undertaking is an excellent one. Through it, perhaps, I shall gain the knowledge which you think I lack, and through it be able to lighten the burdens and brighten the lives of the world's workers."

"Not so, but you will wish as time goes on that it were possible to close your ears to the constant lamentations of the world's children."

"What makes you so pessimistic about my undertaking, Bob?"

"Your present total unfitness, Dorothy, that is all."

"Why not make your home with Margaret and me?" asked Doctor Gordon. "You know we are very anxious to have you. This living by yourself is, by no means, good for you."

"I know," replied Dorothy, "and it is very good of you to want me."

"But you won't come, eh, Dorothy?"

"No, Douglas," replied she, gravely shaking her head, "I have decided to live my life serving and to endeavor to know the working world and its people better."

"Very well, Dorothy," said Doctor Gordon gently, "I trust the knowledge gained will be worth the serving."

"I think it will," said Doctor Ross. "The world is not such a bad place, after all, and I am half-inclined to believe if the knowledge she imparts to the student is not always the best, it is, perhaps, as much the fault of the scholar as of the school."

"You mean," queried Dorothy, "the scholar is to blame for the school?"

"No, for what he learns there."

"From what source do you expect to get the people whom you intend to occupy this 'home-living place' with you?" asked Doctor Gordon.

"The newspapers."

"Why not include the Workers' League?" asked Doctor Ross.

"So you are willing to make a suggestion, Bob?"

"Nevertheless, Dorothy," said Doctor Ross gravely, "I want it understood that I utterly disapprove of the whole plan. I do not like it at all, and wish it were possible to dissuade you from attempting anything of the kind. But as you are not to be deterred from your

purpose, I shall say no more about it, but leave to the future the disclosing of the folly or wisdom of your decision."

"Dear old Bob," said Dorothy gently. "What a good friend you are."

"And am I never to become anything more than that to you, Dorothy?"

"Hush," and she glanced meaningly at the occupant of the chair by the window whose attention for the moment was attracted by something he saw in the street below.

"Never mind him, tell me."

"Don't, Bob," pleaded she, raising troubled eyes to his gloomy ones. "Don't look like that. Rest assured, I shall have to call upon you, again and again, to help me cross my bridges, in the crossing of which I hope to learn something of the structures and the cause of their building."

"What is that about bridges?" asked Doctor Gordon, withdrawing his eyes from the street and looking enquiringly at Dorothy.

"Oh," she replied, laughing, "I was just telling Bob I should, in all probability, need him to help me cross my bridges."

"Time enough to think of crossing bridges when you come to them, Dorothy," cheerily responded Doctor Gordon. "But go and put on your hat and coat, for I

am going to take you back with us in the automobile. Margaret is home, and——"

"I know, she telephoned me," similingly interrupted Dorothy," her big, brown eyes shining as she rose and took from the mantel-piece at her right a small, plainly-trimmed hat which she placed upon her head, glancing meanwhile into the mirror while she fastened it securely to her heavy hair with two long hat-pins.

While she was thus occupied, Doctor Ross rose to his feet and from the back of a chair took a long coat, which he opened out and held while she slipped her slender arms into its sleeves. She thanked him and drew the coat more closely around her.

"Did Margaret tell you, when she called you up, Dorothy," inquired Doctor Gordon, "that she intended to keep your over night?"

"Oh, yes," replied Dorothy, with a nod of her head. "There is my grip over there," and she pointed to a corner of the room near the door.

Doctor Gordon rose and took immediate possession of the grip and, after the usual examination of windows to see that all were securely locked and that nothing was amiss with the lock of the door leading into the apartment, they proceeded on their way.

CHAPTER IV

DOROTHY, THE NEW APPLICANT, AND A CALL FROM MRS. GORDON

DOROTHY, at the beginning of our story, was at the age when one forgets one's years. She was one of a large family whose members, as they grew up, separated and made their homes in every country of the globe. Dorothy made hers in the United States of America, and was for a time the protégé of the father of Margaret Gordon and of her adopted brother, Robert Ross. However, their inability to agree upon many of the important issues of life brought about their partial separation. For instance, their understanding of the meaning of the word "service" was totally at variance. Dorothy believed that it applied to everyone, irrespective of birth, condition or place, and this belief she carried out in her own daily life. She was born to serve, and "Born to Serve" was her motto. "Never ask another to do what you would not care to do yourself," was her favorite precept. Whereas, Margaret Gordon's acceptation of the meaning was entirely different. "If," said she, "service can be procured for

money, or otherwise, why should I serve?" She changed the old adage to read, "Never do for yourself what you can get others to do for you." Such an acceptation was impossible to Dorothy, and she found Margaret's questioning of "Why do you tire yourself out doing this?" or "Why don't you get somebody to do that for you?" and "Why do you trouble yourself doing for others what they would not lift a finger to do for you?" particularly irritating, and were, she considered, an interference with her liberties. Doctor Ross differed from them both in his belief that "service" without "love" was naught. This view of "service" Dorothy could not accept, and Margaret preferred to ignore it altogether.

Although short, Dorothy did not appear so. Her erect and unconscious dignity of bearing and her light-brown hair piled high upon her head, gave the impression that she was much taller. The expression of her face, which was of great beauty and of wonderful strength, was mostly tranquil, and the smooth, broad forehead rarely ever wore a frown. The big, brown eyes looked out quietly and fearlessly upon the world and its people. The nose was faultless and the mouth and chin perfect. The skin was pale and lacked the requisite coloring to make her face the most beautiful one in the world.

In the securing of proper quarters for the establish-

ing of her home-living place, Dorothy permitted very little time to elapse after the doctors' visit, and among the many applicants who applied for admittance was Franklin Thompson. Dorothy was busily engaged one morning in curtain mending, when Bertha, the colored maid of all work, announced:

"A gentleman to see you, Miss Richardson."

"Very well, Bertha," replied Dorothy without raising her eyes from the curtain. "Ask him to step this way."

"I did, ma'am, he's right here."

Dorothy glanced up quickly and saw a man of medium height, with hat in hand, standing in the doorway. "How-do-you-do?" she said pleasantly. "Won't you come in and sit down?"

"Thank you," he replied, remaining where he stood, "it is hardly worth while. I was directed here by the 'Workers' League.' You have a vacancy, I believe?"

"I have only one that would suit you," replied Dorothy, rising and stepping past him into the hall. "It is right here," opening a door a few feet to the left, which disclosed a small but neatly furnished room. Its new furnishings and cleanliness attracted the man, and he said:

"That will do very nicely, and with your permission I shall take possession of it at once."

"The room is ready for occupancy," replied Dorothy smiling. "You may come whenever you wish."

"Thank you," he said, regarding Dorothy somewhat quizzically from a pair of keen gray eyes. "You provide keys, of course."

Certainly. Wait a moment and I will get them for you," and stepping back into the room from which she had come, she returned almost immediately, holding two keys in her hand, which, after stating to which locks they belonged, she handed them to him.

He thanked her and was making his way slowly toward the door leading into the public hall, when she stopped him with the inquiry:

"May I know your name?"

"You may," he said turning. "My name is Franklin Thompson."

The door closed after him and Dorothy went back to her curtain-mending, reflecting that this applicant was some years older than any of the others. They were mere youngsters in comparison, but this one was a man whose years must be as many as her own. It had not been her intention to admit into her "home-living place" anyone as old as herself, and now she is beginning to question the wisdom of admitting Mr. Franklin Thompson as an inmate. To his appearance she had not given much heed, and could only remember that his hair was slightly gray at the temples and

at each side of his mouth were deep lines. A gentleman though he may be, she regrets that his age will preclude the friendly intimacy that exists between the "kiddies," as she calls the other members of the "home-living place," and herself. Just then a voice, which she recognizes, accompanied by footsteps in the hall, breaks in upon her thoughts, and she hears:

"Don't trouble, Bertha, I'll find her."

The voice and footsteps belonged to Mrs. Gordon, so Dorothy called out:

"I'm in here, Margaret!"

"So this is where you are, and as busy as usual. What are you doing?" said a tall, dark, handsome woman becomingly dressed in brown, entering and crossing the room to where Dorothy sat.

"Not so very busy now," replied Dorothy, removing from a chair beside her the mate to the curtain she was mending. "Here, sit down. These curtains were dotted with tiny holes which have taken some time to mend. However, I have nearly finished mending them and they will be ready for the wash tomorrow."

"Well, Dorothy," asked Mrs. Gordon, leaning back in her chair, "do you find your guests as keenly anxious for a 'home-living place' as you thought?"

"So far, it appears to meet with their appreciation," replied Dorothy. "But," surprisedly, "what brings you out so early this morning?"

"What makes you ask that?" laughingly asked Mrs. Gordon. "It is not so very early. It is nearly ten."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Dorothy. "It is rather unusual for you to get out in the morning, isn't it?"

"Well, it is rather exceptional, I will admit," replied Mrs. Gordon smiling, "but I should not say remarkable when an early morning's call upon one's brother is the cause——Now don't look frightened, there is nothing the matter with Bob," added she quickly, noting the look of alarm that spread rapidly over Dorothy's face, "unless, perhaps, it is stubbornness."

"Oh, Margaret," deprecated Dorothy.

"Pig-headedness, then," said Mrs. Gordon, laying emphasis on the pig.

"Why, Margaret, what is the trouble?" asked Dorothy, her eyes opening wide in amazement. "What has he done or what won't he do?"

"Ever since I returned from my trip," replied Mrs. Gordon gravely, "I have been anxiously waiting for the opportune time and place to present themselves when I could, without offending him, not only call to Bob's attention the folly of engaging to perform the duties of an office-nurse such a young and pretty woman as Mrs. Archer, but also to impress upon him the impropriety of retaining her in his employ, he being a man and an unmarried physician. However, as the days and weeks went by, the looked-for opportunity

grew more and more remote, so becoming apprehensive of unkind criticism and goodness only knows what else I——"

"You decided the proper time should be this morning and the proper place should be Bob's office," interrupted Dorothy, looking smilingly across at her caller.

"Yes," emphatically replied Mrs. Gordon. "I determined last night that I should not let another day go by without speaking to Bob about it. But I might just as well have spared myself the trouble, for I was given to understand it was none of my business."

"Bob fails to see the impropriety, I suppose," said Dorothy, lowering her eye-lids to hide the merry twinkle in her eyes.

"Well, if he does, he won't admit it," snapped Mrs. Gordon.

"He has no intention, then, of following your advice and dismissing Mrs. Archer?" queried Dorothy, holding the curtain up in her outstretched hands to look for more holes and, at the same time, hide from Mrs. Gordon's view her laughing face.

"None whatever, I regret to say," gloomily replied Mrs. Gordon. "At first he seemed very much amused and ridiculed the idea of discharging a capable nurse because she was young and pretty. And when I hinted that his reputation might suffer, he only laughed and said: 'I was unduly concerned; that he was well able

to take care of his reputation and could certify to the good conduct of his nurse.' But when I suggested that the friendliness which existed between him and Mrs. Archer might, by some, be misconstrued, he became indignant, and stated, in anything but pleasant tones, 'That as long as there was as little cause for misconstruction he refused to discuss the situation further, excepting to say that he was surprised that I should have taken the trouble to come to him with such a foolish suggestion or to expect him to give it, for a moment, any serious consideration; that the affairs of his office were his own concern, and he considered it proper and fitting that they should be so regarded by others.' He was very angry, and so was I. I told him he could rest assured that neither he nor his affairs would suffer through any interference of mine in the future."

"Poor Margaret," said Dorothy consolingly, as Mrs. Gordon wiped away with her handkerchief the tears which had slowly been gathering in her eyes during the recital, "your good intentions were, no doubt, misunderstood, and Bob evidently looked upon your suggestion as an impertinent interference."

"He, undoubtedly, did," sharply replied Mrs. Gordon. "And it was not intended to be anything of the sort. Mrs. Archer may be an excellent nurse, I am not questioning her ability. But, to prevent unfavorable

comment, I do think it would be wiser for him to have, as an office nurse, a woman of more mature years. Don't you think so, Dorothy?"

"I don't know, Margaret," replied Dorothy musingly. "Sometimes, I think, we give too much consideration to the opinions of others. Perhaps it would be as well if we gave less and depended more upon the still, small voice of the inner man or woman to bear witness to our righteousness."

"Or unrighteousness," returned Mrs. Gordon. "However, you haven't answered my question."

"I think I have, Margaret," replied Dorothy laughing. "Anyway, I have answered it as well as I should."

"In other words," said Mrs. Gordon with a dry, short laugh, "mind your own business and observe closely the steps that lead unto and from thine own dwelling."

"That's good advice, Margaret," said Dorothy, smiling gravely as she snipped with her scissors the thread from the last of the many tiny darned spots and folded up the curtain, "but like many other good things not agreeable to the taste, although good for the system, it is not in demand. Now, I am going to ask you a question. Was this interview of yours with Bob over before Mrs. Archer arrived at the office?"

"Goodness gracious, yes!" replied Mrs. Gordon impatiently. "I called at the office shortly after eight

o'clock. She is not due until some time later. Bob had recovered his usual manner and we were chatting pleasantly when she stepped in a few minutes before nine. You don't suppose the propriety, or impropriety, of her retainment by Bob as his office-nurse was discussed in her presence, do you?"

"Not knowingly, of course," Dorothy hastened to reply. "I was afraid she might have been in that cubby-hole of a place at the left of the reception-room and unintentionally have overheard the conversation."

"Oh, no," assured Mrs. Gordon, "she was not there, nor anyone else. The door was wide open and I looked in."

"I am glad to hear that, for I should not like her to even suspect, let alone know, the purpose of your visit to the office; nor would I have her dream that she was the cause of the little unpleasantness that sprang up this morning between you and Bob."

"Considerate Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, smiling a trifle sarcastically. "But why this considerateness? It seems to me that you and Bob, alike, are more than usually interested in a total stranger."

"That she is a stranger should be an excellent reason for one's interest, I think," soberly replied Dorothy.

"But nothing is known about her," persisted Mrs. Gordon. "Bob admits that he engaged her solely upon the recommendation of Doctor Lewis, and he, you

know, would recommend Satan, himself, if he happended to be out of work and he thought he needed it."

"Poor Mrs. Archer, I don't believe she is any nearer related to that gentleman than we are, do you?"

"I don't know about that," dubiously retorted Mrs. Gordon. "I don't like people who are so reticent about their past."

"Come now, Margaret, be fair," urged Dorothy gently. "A failure to speak of the past and of its associations, does not always imply that it holds what we, or the world, would deem questionable. I cannot believe that Mrs. Archer's reticence is due to anything unworthy."

"Perhaps not," tartly replied Mrs. Gordon, "nevertheless, I should feel easier in my mind if I could learn something about her which would justify that statement."

"The past, I have no doubt," said Dorothy musingly, her eyes fixed thoughtfully upon Mrs. Gordon's face, "does not always contain the most agreeable memories; and for that reason, I believe, many people close and lock the door upon it and throw away the key, and in the way of today they try to forget the road of yesterday, a road, no doubt, strewn with shattered idols and bordered with fading ideals and painful recollections. The brighter spots along the way are nearly, if not altogether, obscured by the darker and greater ones. So

they wisely leave those things behind, the recalling of which would only serve to retard their progress, and bravely take up the duties of the present, neither hoping for nor dreading the future, only desiring to work and wait."

"And you think that is Mrs. Archer's case?"

"I cannot say. It may be," replied Dorothy, removing her eyes and permitting them to travel out of the window.

"Well, all I can say or do will not change the state of affairs, now, so we will drop the subject for the present," said Mrs. Gordon resignedly.

"And promise me you won't worry any more about it, Margaret," pleaded Dorothy, leaning over and laying her small white hands affectionately upon Mrs. Gordon's larger ones lying in her lap. "I assure you, it is needless."

"I only hope it may prove to be so," replied Mrs. Gordon, doubtfully shaking her head as she took the little hands in her own.

"I know it will," assured Dorothy confidently.

"Let us hope so," said Mrs. Gordon rather hopelessly, adding with a quizzical smile, "Why don't you marry Bob, Dorothy, and thus relieve me of all responsibility in that direction?"

Dorothy laughed and withdrew her hands.

"Who knows, perhaps I may, some day," she said,

rising and smiling teasingly. "Just now, however, I am going out in the kitchen to make you a cup of tea. You look completely tired out. If you go home looking the way you do, Douglas will fail to recognize you. Why didn't you take your hat off when you came in? You don't expect to be asked every time you come here, do you?"

Mrs. Gordon smiled and raised her hands to take out the hat-pins.

"Thank you, Dorothy," she said, "I shall be glad to have a cup of tea, for my head feels a trifle queer. And I think, while you are outside, I shall take off my hat and smooth my hair. When I came in I didn't intend to stay more than a few minutes, and I have been here over an hour."

"You surely can afford it, once in a while," laughed Dorothy. "It is not often you honor me with your presence in the morning.

On her way to the kitchen, Dorothy met her new guest, Franklin Thompson, coming in carrying his grip. In response to her nod and bright smile of recognition, he removed his hat and bowed slightly. Leaving instructions with Bertha to put on the kettle, she hastened after him to see if he was rightly located. When she reached him, his hand was on the handle of the door of the room to the right instead of being upon that of the door of the room to the left, which was the

one selected by him. She laughed lightly, and at the sound he turned around.

"You are going into the wrong room," she said, opening the door to the left. "This is the one."

"Pardon me," he said, slightly embarrassed, "I was not aware I was trespassing."

"Nothing serious, I can assure you," Dorothy smilingly hastened to reply. "I trust you will find everything to your liking and will soon feel at home."

"Thank you," he replied, glancing approvingly around the room, "I am sure I shall shortly feel very much at home."

CHAPTER V

FRANK INSTALLED IN THE "HOME-LIVING PLACE"

As Dorothy closed the door and went out, Frank, with a long, deep sigh of relief, tossed his hat upon the bed and sank wearily into a chair. The greater part of yesterday and two hours of today had been spent in seeking to locate a place he might call home. The places he had hitherto seen were either dark and uncleanly or the price asked was too high; and it was, therefore, with reluctance and doubt, when he came to the last name on the list secured from the Workers' League, that he climbed the long flight of stairs leading to Dorothy's "home-living place." His doubts and fears were soon quieted, however, when he beheld the bright, newly-furnished room facing the street. On the floor, in the center of the room, was a pretty green rug; pushed close against the wall, with its white spread and linen covered pillow, was a single brass bed; in the corner, with its white linen-covered top and hand embroidered-covered pin-cushion, stood a dark chiffonier; at the window, to match the chiffonier, was a medium-sized rocking-chair; screwed into the wall, holding

clean linen towels, were two racks; from a brass rod, placed across the window, hung white, dotted swiss sash curtains, and built into the wall was a wardrobe for clothes. A few inexpensive pictures adorned the walls, among the number being a blue and white motto, which read: "Born to Serve."

Two months had passed since Frank had stood in the middle of the Woods' Road in front of the shack and watched the figure of his unbidden guest of that memorable night mingle and disappear among the trees and heavy foliage of the woods. He did not tarry long after she had gone, but closed up the shack and took the midday train back to the city, determining to forget, if he could, his terrible experience of the previous night, the visit of the woman and the conversation he had had with her.

Upon arriving in the city, he proceeded to his old quarters, fully intending to quarrel, no longer, with conditions. However, as he took up the routine of everyday living he found, as the days passed, he could not suppress the spirit of unrest that was surely growing upon him. And it was this spirit of unrest which prompted the seeking of new surroundings. As time went on, he dimly realized that his attitude toward everybody and everything was undergoing a decided change; what he had hitherto regarded negatively he was now beginning to regard positively. Conditions

wherein he had been mentally passive he was now becoming mentally active. In some indescribable way he was learning——

As far back as he could remember, Frank and his mother had lived alone in the little shack in the woods. She had bought it when he was a tiny baby, she had told him, and there the happiest days of his life had been spent. As a child he was not permitted to attend the village school, his early education being undertaken by his mother. When he became old enough to be trusted to travel unaccompanied on the train, his mother selected a school in a nearby city. For six years he went to this school, taking the early morning train and returning late in the afternoon. He was not considered a particularly promising student by his teachers, possessing but the intellect of an ordinary, everyday boy. His failure to graduate was a keen disappointment to his mother, for only through her uncomplaining self-denial had his education been made possible.

From the time he left school until the present, he had been exceedingly unfortunate in his inability to hold a position after it had once been secured. Varied and many were the private concerns and corporations by which he had been employed, and yet he could only boast of one where he had remained a year. In the others, he had stayed anywhere from one day to six

months, and, singularly, he was not discharged from anyone of them because he lacked application or because he had not performed his duties satisfactorily. These constant changes were not due to any fault of his, for he was not only a willing and faithful worker, but he was truthful and honest. They were due, in many instances, to dullness in business, when an order would come from the private office to cut down expenses, which frequently meant a reduction in the office force; and, as Frank was usually the last one employed, he was generally the first to go. Owing to this state of affairs, he could not afford to remain idle and wait for the "good and permanent thing" to present itself, but was forced to work whenever the opportunity offered. Sometimes he would substitute, or fill in, when some other man, through sickness—or something quite as undesirable—was compelled to be absent. This might be for a day, perhaps a week, or even longer; it all depended upon the inability of the other unfortunate fellow to be present. Not infrequently the concerns went out of business or merged into other corporations.

Of the identity of his father and the source of his mother's income, Frank had been kept in ignorance. To all questions relating thereto his mother had always maintained a dignified silence, and never, in any way referred to the days previous to those of his babyhood.

She discouraged the idea of visitors and, excepting the woman who came every week to wash and to do the week's cleaning, a stranger was never seen around the shack.

After her death, Frank, in his loneliness, searched every nook and corner of the shack, looked through every book in the bookcase, threw everything out of the drawers of her desk and of her bureau and examined every article of furniture in the hope that he might find, concealed somewhere, something—an old letter, a photograph—anything, which would reveal his relationship to, and bring him intimately in touch with, some other human-being living in the world. He found nothing. If there had been anything, at any time, which could have been the means of telling a story, good or ill, it had been carefully destroyed. With the exception of a sealed envelope addressed to the firm of lawyers whose signature had always appeared upon the face of his mother's monthly checks and a long, plain, white envelope placed in the top drawer of her desk, there was not a scrap of paper to be found anywhere. The long, white envelope contained two sheets of paper. Upon one was written, in his mother's strong hand-writing, the request that he forward the letter addressed to the attorneys; the other informed him that he was the owner of the shack and of a few hundred dollars. The money was deposited in his name in a

savings bank and had been saved out of her monthly income, which he knew, for she had told him, would cease with her death.

As he looked around the room, after Dorothy left, he felt more satisfied with life than he had since his mother died. He proceeded to open his grip and take out the contents, which he laid away in the clean, newly-papered drawers. While he was thus occupied, there was little to indicate in Frank's clean shaven face any cause for Dorothy to question the advisability of admitting him into her "home-living place." Although habitually wearing an expression of anxious uncertainty, the face is one of undoubted refinement. Below the dark-brown hair covering his head, and which is slightly gray at the temples, is a forehead seamed with deep lines, which should not be there. They are not the lines produced by work, but by the constant pursuit of it. The honest gray eyes, above which are black eyebrows, carry a question, and ask the eternal question, "Why?" The nose is long and inclined to turn under at the end, and the mouth beneath, though large, is clean and as sensitive as a woman's. The chin protrudes a little and rounds off somewhat at the sides.

After placing the now empty grip in the wardrobe, he concluded he would not wait any longer for his trunk to arrive, but would ask, as he went out, the pleasant little lady, whom he had met that morning, to

see that it was properly located when it came. Opening the door, he stepped into the hall and stood there for a moment or so trying to determine in which room he had seen her. Dorothy heard him, and divining the cause of his hesitation came quickly from her room in the front, and inquired:

"Do you wish to speak to me, Mr. Thompson?"

"Yes," he replied, and then stopped abruptly for, as she approached, it occurred to him that this dignified, little lady might consider his request impertinent.

Wondering at his hesitation and fearing it might be due to something not altogether satisfactory in his room, Dorothy stepped into the doorway and looked around. As she did so, the light from the window fell full upon her face and revealed, to Frank's amazement, its pale, tranquil beauty. He thought, as she waited for him to continue, he had never seen so beautiful a face.

Satisfying herself that everything was as it should be, Dorothy looked inquiringly up into his face.

"I was going to ask you," he said, "if I might trouble you to see that my trunk is placed in my room when it comes."

"It won't be any trouble, at all," she replied with a bright smile. "I shall be glad to do it for you."

"Thank you," he said, taking his hat from the bed; "you are very kind."

"Not at all," and turning she went back to her room. Mrs. Gordon was standing in front of the mirror putting on her hat, and, as the front door opened and closed, she exclaimed indignantly:

"I like that man's nerve! What right had he to ask you to look after his trunk, I'd like to know? Why didn't he stay and see about it himself?"

"Why, Margaret," said Dorothy in surprise, "it isn't any trouble, and I like to do these little things for people."

"You do?" queried Mrs. Gordon angrily. "Like to make yourself a servant for a lot of tramps? I'd like to see myself."

"So should I," thought Dorothy.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon severely, turning from the mirror and pulling on her gloves, "there are times when I feel like shaking you, and this is one of them."

"Why don't you, then?" asked Dorothy, smiling provokingly. "I'll give you permission."

"It isn't because you don't deserve it," sternly replied Mrs. Gordon, standing at the table and looking down into Dorothy's laughing brown eyes with a shade of anxiety in her own, "I can tell you that. To have admitted a man who is as old as yourself as an inmate into your 'home-living place,' is bad enough, goodness knows, but to graciously accede to his request that you look after his baggage, instead of telling him to see the

maid—well—I don't know—but it seems to me you must be lacking in ordinary common sense."

"Ordinary common sense," repeated Dorothy teasingly. "That isn't so bad, Margaret. I thought you were going to say something ever so much worse. Don't you know that common sense is always uncommon and is not supposed to be possessed by ordinary common people. I don't feel, after all, I am so different from the rest of the world."

At Dorothy's last words, Mrs. Gordon's face relaxed and her lips parted and extended into an amused smile.

"You are, nevertheless, Dorothy, very different," she said, touching caressingly with her gloved fingers the crown of light-brown hair which framed the teasing, laughing face up-raised to hers; "and for that reason you should possess that extraordinary uncommon thing, common sense."

"Perhaps I do," laughingly replied Dorothy. "The trouble is you fail to recognize it. Your vision must be at fault."

"That is possible, of course," admitted Mrs. Gordon, smiling enigmatically.

"But not probable," returned Dorothy.

"I refuse to say," replied Mrs. Gordon as she proceeded on her way out. "However, I would suggest, hereafter, that all reference to baggage and other such things should be referred to Bertha, if your 'home-

living' people do not wish to remain and take care of it themselves."

Dorothy was about to make some laughing reply when the telephone bell rang. With a murmured apology, she hastily brushed past Mrs. Gordon and ran out into the hall and took down the receiver.

"Hallo," she said.

"Is this you, Dorothy?" asked the voice of Doctor Ross at the other end of the wire.

"Yes, it is I, Bob," she replied. "How are you this morning?"

"Don't tell him I am here," whispered Mrs. Gordon from the doorway.

Dorothy turned her head and with a nod smilingly assented as she listened to his voice telling her he felt very well and would be around in his automobile shortly after office hours to take her for a ride that evening.

"That's awful good of you, Bob. I will be ready and won't keep you waiting a minute."

"All right, then," he said, "I will be around about half-past eight. Goodby."

"Goodby," she answered back and hung up the receiver.

"What did he want, Dorothy?" asked Mrs. Gordon, leaving the doorway and leaning up against the wall.

"Oh, he just called me up to tell me he was coming around this evening to take me for a ride."

"I wish," said Mrs. Gordon thoughtfully, "Bob would not call here for you in his automobile."

"Why, Margaret?" innocently inquired Dorothy.

"For by so doing, he places your reputation in the mouths of the evil-minded public."

"And so you think the evil-minded public is worthy of consideration, do you?" smilingly asked Dorothy. "I must say I do not. How I live is of more importance to me than what it thinks, what it says or what it does."

"That may be all very well," replied Mrs. Gordon, slowly making her way, followed by Dorothy, along the hall toward the door, "but it has been my experience if one does not consider public opinion, it is not long before public opinion is considering you and inquisitively concerning herself with the way in which you conduct your life. If you refuse to satisfy her curiosity—determined to accept no standard of living but your own—with brazen effrontery she looks with prying eyes into your most sacred affairs and then hastens to reveal, with a lying tongue, what she thinks she has found there. No matter how pure, simple or true the life, if she cannot know all about it, or if the outward living of that life differs in many respects from what is usually considered proper and right, she believes, and does not hesitate to relate, there must be some unworthy motive for keeping her in the dark, and

it is not long before the object of her scrutiny is paying the penalty."

"I care nothing for public opinion," replied Dorothy, with an emphatic stamp of her tiny foot. "Public opinion is for cowards; I have never subscribed to her and I never will."

"Very well, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, placing her arm affectionately around the determined, little figure. "I certainly hope it may be your good fortune to have her pass you by and that a whiff of her foul breath may never come near you."

"She may come or stay away, I care nothing for her," indifferently replied Dorothy.

"Well, for the sake of those who love you, you dear, little soul," said Mrs. Gordon, stooping and tenderly kissing the firm-set lips, "I hope she stays away."

As Mrs. Gordon finished speaking, Dorothy's face lost the look of indifference and into it there came one of concern, and she said:

"Now, don't go and worry about me; I'm all right."

"Indeed you are, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, as she went downstairs. "It's the world that is all wrong. Goodby. Come over to dinner tomorrow night."

"I will. Goodby," called Dorothy after her.

With a smile and a farewell wave of her hand, Mrs. Gordon proceeded down the stairs, and Dorothy went back into her "home-living place."

CHAPTER VI

DOCTOR ROSS AND DOROTHY GO FOR THEIR RIDE

"HAND me my hat first, Bertha," said Dorothy, holding out her hand, "and then answer the telephone. If it is the doctor, tell him not to trouble to come up, for I shall be right down."

"Yes, ma'am, it's the doctor," said Bertha, returning a few moments later.

"Very well, help me on with my coat," and Dorothy slipped her arms into its sleeves. Buttoning it up, she told Bertha she might have the evening off. Then picking up her gloves, which were lying on the top of the bureau, she pulled them on as she hurried out. Doctor Ross was waiting for her at the foot of the stairs.

"I trust I didn't keep you waiting long, Bob," was her greeting.

"You never do, Dorothy," replied Doctor Ross smiling. "In that respect you are an exceptional woman."

"Nonsense," laughed she as they left the building.

They were soon comfortably seated, and John, who had received his instructions, started the car. As it

turned the corner and sped up the broad avenue, Dorothy asked:

"Where are we going tonight, Bob?"

"Not any particular place, unless you have some special one you care to suggest."

"No," replied Dorothy, settling herself back a trifle wearily in her seat, "I can't think of any special place; all places are alike to me."

"Was today an unusually hard day, Dorothy?" the doctor asked solicitously.

"Not particularly so. What made you ask that?"

"You appear tired."

"Well," she confessed, "I do feel a little tired. However, the ride in the cool air and your sympathetic presence beside me will soon dissipate that."

"I hope so. How is everything progressing at the 'home-living place?' "

"So far, very satisfactorily. I have heard no complaints."

"They will come in time, never fear," he mentally commented. Aloud, he asked:

"Any new applicants?"

"One. He came this morning."

"From the League?"

"Yes."

"What kind of a youngster is the new one?"

"I am afraid, Bob," replied she hesitatingly, "you

would hardly call him a youngster. He is older, very much older, than the other kiddies."

"How much older?"

"A good many years, I should say. He is fully as old as I am."

"What sort of a looking chap is he?"

A puzzled look past over the face of Dorothy. Then she laughed and said:

"I really couldn't say, Bob, I paid so little attention to his appearance. His manners, I remember, were good, and gave me the impression it would be safe to admit him into my 'home-living place.'"

"Well, never mind about his looks; they are not necessary. His age is sufficient to attract Margaret's well-meaning but, nevertheless, impertinent interference in your direction." And Doctor Ross leaned back in his seat and laughed softly. "I wonder," continued he, "how much sleep she will get when she learns you have admitted a real live man into your 'home-living place.'"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied Dorothy laughing. "I am going to dine with her and Douglas tomorrow night."

"You are!" exclaimed the doctor incredulously. "You're surely not going to walk into that hive of questions voluntarily?"

"I am, though."

"Then I shall have to arrange to take dinner over there, too, for my presence may possibly guarantee your escape with few injuries. Otherwise, it is doubtful if you would not literally be battered up and the reputation of the 'home-living place' be severely damaged."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Bob," said Dorothy with feigned severity.

"Well, I am not. This solicitousness, which is uncalled for and unsought, is becoming intolerable. She, apparently, is incapable of comprehending for herself or others any other existence but that subscribed to by the conventional world. Its mandatory laws, in her opinion, must be obeyed; its rulings must be followed and its voice, right or wrong, must always be heard."

"Personally, I feel very sorry for Margaret," said Dorothy, "for she certainly spends a great deal of her time worrying needlessly about other people and their affairs. And I can't help believing, in a way, it is unselfish solicitude, too."

"It may be. It is I know unnecessary," replied Doctor Ross, gazing thoughtfully ahead. "One thing is evident, however, and that is her utter inability to appreciate the right of everyone to select the body of water upon which his, or her, vessel shall sail. Some people are perfectly satisfied with the placid waters of the Lakes of Convention and upon them make their

homes. Contentedly sailing around their peaceful borders, they never care to venture their craft beyond the narrow and limited confines of the lakes. Margaret is one of these. Others, more curious, become dissatisfied with the quiet waters of the Lakes of Convention and leave them for the more troubled waters of the constant rushing Rivers of Interrogation. Here, launchel forth, they set their sails. But alas! as they sail, the gaze of their inquiring eyes becomes covetous, and they grudge, one to the other, the space required to safely navigate their barks. Dorothy, you are one of these. And the others, many of them, long since grown weary of the former and unsatisfied with the latter, turn to the waters of the Great Sea of Life. Scorning its gigantic waves and the fierceness of its sweeping gales and caring naught for its tossings and crossings, they thrust forth upon that mighty deep to learn what it alone can teach them. As they embark their questioning voices can be plainly heard, but later, as their vessels continue to ride the waves, they are hushed and soon are lost in the loud roar of the wind which sweeps over the Ocean of Experience. Dorothy, I am one of these."

Dorothy sighed deeply. Bob, to her, at times, was such an inexplicable being.

The sigh did not escape the doctor, and he asked tenderly:

"What makes you sigh, Dorothy?"

"Because, Bob, you are, at times, so hard to understand."

Doctor Ross laughed as he asked: "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do," she replied decidedly. "I have great trouble sometimes in determining just what you mean."

"I am glad it is only sometimes," said the doctor, possessing himself of one of her small hands.

"So am I, Bob," replied she, permitting her hand to remain quietly in his.

"Never mind," said he assuringly, "a time will come when you will never fail to understand me."

"I hardly think so," and Dorothy shook her head doubtfully.

"Why?"

"I don't know, unless it is because your life is so different from mine. You seem to live such a purposeful life."

"And you do not, is that it?" laughingly inquired the doctor.

"I don't mean that, exactly," irritably replied Dorothy, trying to withdraw her hand and failing in the attempt.

"That's not surprising, is it?" asked the doctor teasingly. "I am a physician and you are a little landlady."

"I can't see that that in any way affects the situation —they both involve service."

"That is true," admitted the doctor. "The service, nevertheless, you must own, is very different."

"That's just it. Yours is a service based upon knowledge, while mine is one caused, more or less, by accident."

"And, consequently," said the doctor, "you conclude the outcome of your service is not always satisfying."

"Well, I cannot say it is altogether so," she reluctantly admitted.

"Have you sought to find the reason?" sympathetically asked he.

"Oh, yes," hopelessly, "but one might just as well try to find a ray of light in the dark as to seek this hidden thing which, evidently, is not to be found."

"What makes you think it is not to be found?"

"Because of humanity's wants."

"You're swimming in deep water, Dorothy," said the doctor warningly.

"I know I am, Bob, and I'd dearly love to see the shore and find a landing-place."

"There is one waiting for you now, Dorothy," said the doctor, his voice unutterably tender, and he pressed the little hand he held within his own. "It has been waiting here for you for a long, long time, and its owner would only be too pleased to have you avail

yourself of its protecting shelter, its great love and boundless peace."

"I should like to, Bob, I really should, but I am afraid to take the risk."

"Take what risk, Dorothy? I don't quite understand you."

"Myself. I am afraid to risk myself, Bob. I am afraid the owner of that landing-place would eventually control my every thought and deed and I should, in time, become perfectly satisfied with its cool shade, its pleasant walks and quiet resting places. I should, I fear, lose myself and my identity would gradually be absorbed in the greater identity which I should find there."

"I assure you, Dorothy," said the doctor kindly, "your fears are groundless. What is really ours can never be lost. Only the material things which we, in our foolishness call Mine, we eventually lose. But those are only the borrowed garments in which are enfolded our lesser selves. As the years go by and we become wiser, a greater self takes possession and replaces that lesser self, and its tattered, worn-out garments drop away, one by one, and we recognize and gladly wear those that truly belong to us. The things of yesterday are forgotten, and it is well that they should be, for they are but the shadows of the things of today. These can never be lost, can never be worn

out, for they are always abiding and forever indestructible."

Dorothy shook her head helplessly but made no reply.

"If you should become my wife," resumed he, "it would not mean that we should lose our individual identity, but it would mean that we would be more completely identified with each other. That is, it would simply be the blending of yourself and myself in ourself; it would be the union of You and I into We, and our mutual efforts would be so directed that the happiness of the You and the I would be assured."

Impatiently withdrawing her hand from his, Dorothy laid it over the other one lying quietly in her lap. She knew from experience the futility of trying to argue with Bob, so she continued to remain silent.

After they had travelled some distance without speaking, Doctor Ross, bending his head down until it reached hers, asked:

"What possible objection can you have to such a union?"

Forced to reply, Dorothy straightened herself up in her seat, and said:

"I have only one, Bob, but that one is sufficient to make such a union, at the present time, an impossibility. I fear, nay, I know, it would utterly interfere with my service."

"What nonsense! What ever put such an idea as that into your head?"

"It would, nevertheless," replied she doggedly.

"You are altogether wrong, Dorothy. Instead of interfering with your service it would enhance its value a hundred-fold. Indeed, it is a barren service in which Love is not admitted."

"I am sorry, Bob, but, just now, I cannot accept your view of the situation."

"Not now, perhaps," he reluctantly admitted; "but," exultingly, "the day is not far distant when you will—nay, when you must—accept the situation as it is."

"As it is! What do you mean, Bob?"

"I mean by the barrenness and unsatisfying results of your service——"

"It is useless to continue the conversation along this line," she interrupted impatiently. She was now thoroughly annoyed. "I cannot agree with you. Personally, I do not consider Service and Love 'good mixers.' Separately they work very well; but when hitched together they make an obstinate pair, and one not easily managed. If one or the other does not bolt when directed, by a gentle pull of the rein, to move ever so slightly from their chosen place in the road, they show their aversion for each other by balking when they are called upon to draw humanity's wagon up some steep hill or over some piece of extraordinarily rough road.

As they reach the foot of the hill or the piece of rough road, they come to a halt. Service concludes here is a place where they should pull together, and states that fact to her neighbor on the other side of the tongue. Love surveys the ground over which Service would travel, and shakes his head— He fails to agree. 'They should,' he says, 'continue along the smooth, if longer, road, and thus spare the occupants of the wagon the bumps and jolts which they cannot hope to escape if they travel the road selected by Service. He also points out the possibility of someone falling from the wagon and getting hurt and might, in the eagerness of Service to reach the top of the hill, be overlooked and left at the roadside to die.' Service, disgusted with what she calls 'Love's lack of backbone,' determines to draw the wagon up the hill alone, and despite Love's protests leaves him at the foot of the hill. Service, on the contrary, is not so greatly concerned about the occupants of the wagon; her chief concern is to reach the desired destination with as little delay as possible. Her business is 'to get there,' regardless of cost. 'What,' argues she, 'does it matter if one or two do drop off; there are always plenty only too anxious to fill their seats in the valley below? And,' concludes she, 'if they cannot hang on to their seats they deserve to lose them, anyway.'"

"Poor Love," said the doctor sighing.

"I cannot see that Love is any worse off than Service," said Dorothy, who had regained her good humor. "Indeed, I think my sympathies are oftentimes more with the latter than they are with the former."

"Poor Service, too, then," he said dolefully.

"It's too bad, Bob, but it's no use; they will not agree."

"Poor Love," again said Doctor Ross with a sigh.

"Why do you so greatly sympathize with Love instead of with Service?" demanded Dorothy. "I am sure, if anything, he is the more refractory of the two."

"He would not be," mused the doctor, "if he could prevail upon Service to banish the tongue which separates them."

"But why do you feel so sorry for Love?" persisted Dorothy.

"Because he is so often given credit with being something he is not. He is supposed to be blind when he has excellent eye-sight; he is supposed to be deaf when his hearing is acute; he is supposed to be dumb when from his lips flow words of no light meaning. He is supposed to be old and of unsound mind, when his youth is everlasting and his wisdom that of the ages past and of those to come; he is supposed to be a beggar, when he is a king reigning over an eternal kingdom. Vainly he pleads with Service to be its queen,

but she, owing to her material blindness, her worldly deafness, her ceaseless chatter and her boasted ephemeral knowledge, is totally unable to recognize the king in her wooer and to appreciate the kingdom over which he reigns."

"Poor Service," said Dorothy sarcastically, "she is terribly afflicted."

"She is terribly handicapped," retorted the doctor.

"Then why," asked Dorothy impatiently, "does he stand protesting at the foot of the hill when his place should be at the other side of the tongue helping her to draw the load up the hill?"

"Because," slowly and emphatically replied the doctor, "the province of Love is to rule and that of Service to obey. Indeed, if he should consent to travel by her side up the hill, some great change would take place and his name would then be Indifference. The work of Love, Dorothy, is to make the crooked path and the steep places straight and to smooth the roughened road."

"Why doesn't he, then?" sharply asked she.

"He does. Surely he is not to blame if Service persists in selecting her own road, nor for the fact that she is bound to get stuck before she is half-way up the hill."

Dorothy's response was an exclamation of impatience.

Doctor Ross replied by reaching over and taking the small rebellious hands that refused to keep still and held them firmly in his own, and musingly continued:

"Poor Service, you started off proudly enough, so sure were you you could reach the top alone; but you had hardly left Love behind before you began to notice the tongue at your side was weighing heavily upon you and hindering to a great extent the pulling of the load. The creaking, creaking of the wheels as they revolve slowly around is beginning to wear upon your nerves and causes you to become somewhat irritable and, as you slacken your pace a little to glance up the hill, you note with grave apprehension it is steeper and longer than you believed, and you are far from the top. Humanity's wagon, which seemed so easy to draw when Love was on the other side of the tongue, is now becoming harder and harder to pull along—and my, how tired you are!——

"With aching head and muscles so strained they are beginning to assert themselves, you feel keenly what you consider is 'Love's base desertion of you.' That you may have deserted him does not for a moment occur to you. Incensed that he should have left you to pull the load alone, you determine to show him that you are capable of doing it and put forth an extra effort. This causes you to stumble and fall. Slightly perturbed, but in no-wise discouraged, you pick your-

self up and, shaking the harness in place, pull long and hard to start the wagon; but, to your dismay, it refuses to budge. Stuck you are,—and not half-way up the hill. After repeated efforts, you half-way conclude there is but one thing left to do, and that is to turn around and go back. How you hate to do that, so you give another long and hard pull;—but to no use. There is no help for it; back you must go. And so you turn around and go back. But, strange to say, the road does not seem the same, and you wonder, as you jog along, how you could have failed to notice the sickly-looking trees at either side and the brownish-colored grass, with ne'er a green blade, covering their roots; also, how the many strangely appearing objects which line the wayside could have escaped your observation. These, curiously, instead of arousing your interest fill you with a vague dread, and with head averted you hasten on anxiously eager to reach the bottom of the hill. Here you are met by Love, who, without a word, takes his place at the other side of the tongue, and humanity's wagon quietly proceeds along the road selected by Love, the only one by which it can safely travel."

As the doctor finished speaking, he released Dorothy's hands and drawing them back, she said:

"I don't want to be rude, Bob, but let us change the conversation."

"Very well, Dorothy," replied the doctor, stifling a sigh, "what shall it be?"

"Tell me about your work, Bob. In your profession each day must bring you some new and interesting feature."

"They are not so new and interesting to the physician as they are to the laity. You see, he beholds them in all their nakedness; they stand before him denuded of all their high-sounding and manifold names, which so befog the mind of the laity, and are recognized by him to be what they really are. Indeed, before he attempts a diagnosis they are stripped of everything that would prevent a cure."

"I see."

"No, you don't, Dorothy. I only wish you did."

"Well, I am trying to," quickly retorted she. "That ought to satisfy you."

"Nevertheless, it does not."

"Well, it should. Anyway, I think it is time we turned around and went back. John," directed she, "when we come to the next block turn the car around and go back."

John deigned no answer, but passed the next block and went straight on.

Thinking he had not heard her, she repeated her

order in a louder tone of voice, but this also failed and the car sped on. She then leaned over and touched him on the arm, and to this, too, he failed to respond. As the car continued to go on, she looked enquiringly at Doctor Ross, and asked:

"What does this mean?"

"I'll ask him and see. John, did you not hear Miss Richardson tell you to turn the car around and go back a few minutes ago?"

"I did, sir," replied John, much to Dorothy's astonishment.

"And you refused to do it?"

"I did, sir."

"Why?"

"Because you did not order me to do so, sir."

"And you refuse to take orders from anyone but me, is that it?"

"I do, sir."

"You are an exceptional servant, John," replied Doctor Ross, a note of appreciation in his voice.

"Decidedly so," assented Dorothy. "However, I should think you would find that sort of thing rather provoking and embarrassing at times."

"I cannot say that I have," replied the doctor. Then turning to John, he said:

"At the next corner you may turn the car around and we will go back."

"Very well, sir."

At the corner the car turned around and they were soon speeding homewards, Dorothy sitting quietly back in her seat and the doctor beside her wrapped in thought.

CHAPTER VII

MRS. ARCHER RECOGNIZES AN OLD FRIEND

"MRS. ARCHER," said Doctor Ross from the doorway, his hat in one hand and an open telegram in the other, "I expect an out-of-town patient in this morning. If she should arrive before I return make her as comfortable as possible. Kindly file this away," and he gave her the telegram.

"Very well, doctor. What time do you expect her?"

"It's all there," he said, indicating by a movement of his head the telegram in her hand.

"Oh, all right. Is there anything else you wish me to attend to while you are away?"

"I think not," he replied, glancing at his watch, "excepting, of course, the regular correspondence."

Mrs. Archer nodded understandingly and folded up the telegram and laid it under a paper-weight lying at one side of her desk.

"Well, I must be off," said the doctor, and he turned and hurried out.

The office-door had hardly closed upon him before Mrs. Archer, with light, quick footsteps, walked over

to the window and, concealed behind the curtain, watched him as he ran down the steps and took his seat in the automobile. The car started, and she turned away with a smile upon her lips and, gathering up the neat pile of opened, unanswered letters that was lying upon the doctor's desk, she exclaimed:

"What a man he is, and what a privilege it is to work for him!"

The more urgent letters, she knew, the doctor always put on the top, and these she proceeded to answer first. The contents of the telegram could wait, she concluded, for there would be plenty of time to acquaint herself with the patient's name when the bell announced her arrival.

To read the letters and frame suitable replies took some time, but at last they were all answered and, pushing her chair back from the desk, she got up and walked over to the doctor's desk and laid them upon it to await his signature, which he regarded as being an important part of the letter, and was, therefore, insistent that all communications purporting to be indorsed by him, no matter how seemingly unimportant, must bear his personal signature.

Glancing at the clock on her way back to her desk, Mrs. Archer saw it was ten minutes to twelve, and the patient had not arrived. Wondering if she would have time to smooth her hair, wash her hands and get

ready for luncheon before she put in an appearance, she leisurely shut the typewriter down in her desk and slowly drew the telegram from under the paper-weight and was about to unfold it when the door of the doctor's office opened and, raising her eyes quickly, she encountered the startled and terrified stare of a pair of blue ones. The recognition was mutual, although it was not visible in the face nor voice of Mrs. Archer, who arose hastily and walked quickly over to the side of the evidently awe-stricken young woman, asking in the composed, quiet voice of the nurse:

"You are the out-of-town patient whom Doctor Ross expects, are you not?"

"Yes, but—who—are—you——" stammered the patient, her eyes scanning closely the calm, unruffled face bending over her.

"I am the doctor's nurse. My name is Mrs. Archer."

"Pardon me, but you greatly resemble someone whom we all have become to believe is dead. My, but it was a shock!" said the patient, with a pitiful attempt at a smile.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Archer, regarding the patient with professional solicitude. "Won't you sit down in one of these comfortable chairs," designating by a slight movement of her hand two large, leather-upholstered arm-chairs, "and make yourself as comfortable as you possibly can until the doctor returns,

which, I am sure, will not be long, now? Or, perhaps, you would prefer to lie down here upon the couch?"

"Thank you, no; I have arranged to take luncheon with the doctor's sister and her husband, and as it is now twelve," looking at a watch set in gold bands and fastened securely around her wrist, "I will not wait but go right over, and from there will telephone Doctor Ross at just what hour he may expect me this afternoon," replied the patient.

"Is there not something I can do for you?" anxiously asked Mrs. Archer as she followed the playmate of her childhood and the close friend of her school-girl days to the door.

"Nothing," replied the patient, turning and removing her hand from the door-knob, "unless," and she raised her eyes questioningly to Mrs. Archer's face, "you can explain away that unmistakable likeness."

"I am sorry I cannot," replied Mrs. Archer regretfully.

"You must think me very rude," said the patient, opening the door and stepping out into the hall followed by Mrs. Archer, "when, after all, it is only a passing likeness," and she closely scrutinized the face of the nurse. "My friend, come to think of it, would, I think, by this time, look older than you do."

Mrs. Archer smiled assuringly down into the pale face with its tired lines, and said, as she opened the

street-door: "I will tell the doctor you were here and communicate your message to him."

"Thank you, if you will be so kind," responded she as she went down the steps. Then entering the taxi-cab, drawn up at the curb, she turned her head and smilingly bowed farewell to Mrs. Archer standing in the doorway.

Vainly struggling to maintain her wonted composure, Mrs. Archer closed the door and went back to her chair in front of her desk and sat down. The thing that she had dreaded for the past six years had at last happened, and there was no longer any safety in the thought that she was actually lost to all of her old associations. What guarantee had she now that the same thing might not occur again and that the identity which she was beginning to think she was wholly justified in believing was really dead and buried, might not, at any time, be resurrected and brought forth for all who had once known it to know it once more and learn of its regrettable history, which she, for Ronald's sake had striven so hard to conceal? She had not any. There was but one thing to do, she concluded after much thought, and that was to refuse to recognize, at all times, the resurrected identity. Dead she was to all who had ever known her, and she determined, come what might, she would so remain; and that she was Mrs. Archer, the nurse, and not the lost daughter

of the rich, country land-owner, she would, forever, stoutly maintain.

Realizing the grave danger of permitting her thoughts to travel backwards, she, with exceptional strength of will, mentally closed the door upon the things belonging to the years of her childhood and young womanhood; and with the vision of her little, blind son before her, she wrapped herself up in the present, closed her eyes to the past and refused to look into the future.

When the bell, announcing luncheon was ready, rang out from the foot of the basement stairs, Mrs. Archer had succeeded in banishing from her mind all disturbing thoughts, and rising from her chair she walked briskly over to the wash-bowl and bathed her face and hands in clean, cool water. She dried them, and then stepped quickly over to the mirror to assure herself that her hair was in order and, at the same time, scanning her face to see if, by any chance, a trace of her recent agitation was left there. Satisfied that there was none and that she appeared as usual, she turned away and with the habitual half-smile playing about her lips passed into the hall, down the stairs and took her seat at the dining-room table, greeting with a cheery smile and nod the four persons already seated there.

She had finished eating her luncheon and was about

to follow the last of the four persons up the stairs when Doctor Ross walked into the dining-room. Glancing at her with one of his grave smiles, he said, surveying the empty seats, "I am late."

"Not so very," she assured him.

"I was unavoidably delayed," he explained, drawing out his chair and sitting down to the table. "I was unfortunate, or rather fortunate, enough to bowl some poor fellow over with my car."

"Oh, my! Was he badly hurt?"

"No, more surprised, I should say," he replied, beginning to eat the soup which Maud placed in front of him. "But not more so than I when I got a chance to look into his face, for although he failed to recognize me I knew him at once. When he was a boy, he and I were play-fellows; indeed, up to the time of his young manhood we were the best of friends."

"And you stopped to talk over old times, I suppose?"

"In a way, yes. But what really kept me was trying to make him recollect who I was, for he appeared to be totally unable to recall that such a person as I had ever existed; and thought it strange that I should be able to recognize him when he could not bring to his recollection a thing which would identify me to him or that could, in any way, render my face familiar. Nevertheless, in spite of the lines in his face, I assured him I would know his honest, gray eyes anywhere

The mention of his name and that of the school he attended appeared to puzzle him even more. However, after much persuasion on my part, he at last consented to a renewal of the acquaintanceship, which I shall endeavor to have grow and ripen into the old friendship of long ago."

"In your enthusiasm at meeting an old friend," reminded Mrs. Archer smilingly, "you have forgotten to ask about your out-of-town patient."

"Sure enough!" exclaimed he. "Did she arrive? If so, what has become of her? There was no one in the office when I came in a few moments ago."

"She did, but not finding you here she decided to go over to Doctor and Mrs. Gordon's, where, she stated, she had promised to take luncheon. She said, also, she would telephone you from there just at what hour you might expect her this afternoon."

"That is not surprising, for she and Mrs. Gordon are great friends."

As he finished speaking, the telephone bell rang, and, with, "That, in all probability, is she now," Mrs. Archer hastily left the room, ran up the stairs and into the office. She took down the receiver from its hook and, in response to her gentle "Hallo," Mrs. Gordon imperatively requested her to ask the doctor to come to the telephone.

"Wait a moment and I will call him," replied Mrs.

Archer, placing the receiver upon the stand, and going to the head of the stairs she called down, "You are wanted, doctor."

"I'll be right there," he answered back, and rising from the table he hurried up the stairs. "Mrs. Leigh, I suppose?" he queried when he reached the top.

"No, Mrs. Gordon."

He placed the receiver to his ear, and Mrs. Archer went into her office and closed the door. Shortly afterwards it was opened by the doctor, who, evidently, was going right out, for he carried his hat in his hand. Mrs. Archer raised her head from the instrument she was cleaning and smilingly looking in his direction awaited instructions.

"Mrs. Archer," said he smiling, "I have, I know, a pleasant surprise for you."

"You have," replied she laughing, "I am glad to hear it."

"Yes, I have instructed John, after he leaves me at Doctor Gordon's, to call for you here and take you and Ronald for a ride through the park, or, if not there, anywhere else you may wish to go. This will, I trust, recompense the little fellow for the disappointment of a few weeks ago."

"That certainly is a pleasant surprise," said Mrs. Archer, delighted at the prospect. "But," apprehen-

sively, "are you sure you will not need me this afternoon?"

"Yes, I have to see Mrs. Leigh at Doctor Gordon's office. If you are back at five, that will be time enough. I expect a patient between five and six o'clock."

"You are very kind, doctor, and I know Ronald will enjoy the ride."

"Yes, I am sure he will. Poor little chap, his amusements are not very many."

"Indeed, they are not," agreed she, sighing.

"Well, be back at five, if you can," said the doctor, turning about and going out.

The door had hardly closed upon him, before Mrs. Archer stood in front of the telephone and was calling up the number of the apartment house in which hers was located and in response to the almost immediate "Hallo," was requesting to be connected with apartment twenty-six.

There was a faint click, and then Martha's voice asked: "Who is it?"

"It is I, Martha. Lift Ronald upon a chair, I want to talk to him."

Very soon her little son's voice in a shrill, "Hallo," came over the wire.

"This is mother, darling, and she has a big surprise in store for her little man. Tell Martha to get you

ready at once and bring you over to the doctor's office."

"Oh—mamma!" delightedly exclaimed the child, "is it truly big?"

"Yes, indeed, truly big. You just wait and see if it isn't. Now let mother speak to Martha."

"Dat's all right, ma'am," interpolated Martha, "I heerd what you said."

"You did!" laughed Mrs. Archer. "Then your head must have been right by Ronald's."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then let me say goodby to him."

"I'm here, mamma," said Ronald.

"Mother must say goodby, now, darling, for she has lots to do before you come over."

"Goodby, mamma, don't lose the s'prise."

"I won't," assured his mother. "Hurry up, now, and don't keep it waiting."

"All wight. Goodby, mamma."

"Goodby, little son," she answered back and, hanging up the receiver, went back to her work.

At half-past two her work was all done and she was sitting down waiting for Martha and Ronald to arrive. The doctor's automobile, with John sitting in front, stood at the curb. She smiled as she looked out of the window and saw the motionless figure, and wondered as she rose to get her hat and coat if he would come

in and tell her he was ready to take them for a ride. He did not. This, evidently, had not been a part of his instructions, and he would not depart one iota from them. Indeed, it was not until five minutes later when she said, standing on the sidewalk with her boy's hand in hers, "Here we are, John," that he removed his eyes from the enchanting distance. Then he got down and opened the door, saying:

"The doctor's orders are, ma'am, to take you and your little boy through the park, or, if you do not care to go there, anywhere else you may wish to go."

"The park will do, John," replied Mrs. Archer as she lifted Ronald into the automobile and, quickly following, seated him on a seat beside her.

Without another word John closed the door, mounted his seat and started the car in the direction of the park.

"Oh—mother, this is a 'truly big s'prise!' " exclaimed Ronald excitedly, sitting straight up in his seat, his sightless, blue eyes wide open and his baby-hands clasped tightly together in his lap.

"I am glad my boy thinks so."

"Oh, yes, this is 'bootiful'!" tilting his chin slightly.

Mrs. Archer smiled at the word "bootiful." To her it meant a great deal, for it was only the pleasant interruptions in his quiet, baby life that he called "bootiful." The unpleasant ones seemed, in his child-mind, to take on an ugly shape, and they were not "bootiful."

As the car turned into the park entrance, Ronald said:

"Tell me when we come to the park, mother."

"We are right there, now, darling."

"Are there any 'quiwels, mother?"

"I don't see any yet, dear, but mother will keep her eyes open."

"My eyes are open, mother," said Ronald, puzzled, putting a little hand up to his eyes. "Why can't I see the 'quiwels? Do only big ladies and big mens see when their eyes are open?"

"Not always, little son," suppressing a sigh, "mother is sorry to say."

"But you do, don't you, mother?"

"Mother tries to, dear."

"If I keep my eyes open, mother, will I see when I grow to be a big man?"

"Mother hopes so, son."

Ronald was silent for several minutes, then he asked:

"Don't you see any 'quiwels yet, mother?"

"Mother is looking for them, dear. Yes, she sees one now. He is sitting up on his little hind legs and is holding a nut in his paws. Poor, little chap, he has to nibble off the shell to get the nut which is inside. And there is another one running down the trunk of the tree over there. And there is one scampering after another one on the grass, his long, bushy tail trailing

behind him. There are lots and lots of squirrels, and such cunning, little fellows they are, too."

"Do the 'quiwels always live in the park, mother?"

"Yes, darling."

"Can the 'quiwels see other 'quiwels, mother?"

"Sometimes, son."

"Then I'd like to be a 'quiwel."

"What! and live in the park away from mother?"

"You could be a 'quiwel, too, couldn't you, mother?"

"But mother does not think she would care to be a squirrel, and is not sure she would like her boy to be a squirrel, either. She loves him just as he is."

"But then I could see you, mother. Wouldn't you like that?"

This was too much for Mrs. Archer, and she bent over and tenderly lifted the child upon her lap, saying, as she wrapped her arms tightly around him, "Indeed, mother would, honey-boy. But we won't talk any more about the squirrels. Just lie quietly here, in mother's arms, and she will tell you a story. What shall I tell you?"

"About the crying of the trees and the flowers, mother," said Ronald, settling down in his mother's arms. "I like that story."

"You mean," said Mrs. Archer, placing the child's head more comfortably upon her arm, "the one which tells of how the wind and the rain came and made the

trees and flowers cry, and how afterwards the sun came out and kissed them with his warm, soft rays and dried their tears and told them to stop their crying and lift up their heads and sing a song which would make all the people glad?"

"Yes," said Ronald, his mouth opening into a yawn. "That's—a—nice—story—— You like it, too, don't you, mother?"

"Yes, I think it is a very nice story, but if mother does not begin right away, I am afraid her boy will be asleep before it is half-told."

"I'm not sleepy, mother," assured Ronald, "I'm just tired. You begin the story."

True to her prediction, however, she had not proceeded far with the story before Ronald, lulled by the air and the rapid motion of the automobile, was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCESHIP RENEWED

"THERE is nothing the matter with you, Thompson," said Doctor Ross, after a careful examination of that gentleman's person. "My automobile, colliding with your physical structure, shook you up a bit, that's all."

"Thank you, doctor," replied someone with whom we are already acquainted, Franklin Thompson, for it was he whom the doctor's automobile had bowled over that morning.

"Can't you remember the name by which you used to call me when you were a boy, Frank?" asked the doctor.

"I am sorry, but I cannot," replied Frank regretfully.

"You will in time."

"I have not the least objection," replied Frank, resuming his coat and sitting down in one of the doctor's comfortable chairs, "and regret, unlike you, my inability to recall any incident that would establish in my mind our previous acquaintanceship. Nevertheless, it shall not prevent me from endeavoring to merit the friendship which you now extend to me so generously."

"But only on one condition," said the doctor, "you must grant me yours in return."

"You are very welcome to it," said Frank, looking into the grave, black eyes of the doctor, "but," smiling and doubtfully shaking his head, "you will find it, I am afraid, of little benefit to you."

"That is something for me to decide," said the doctor, extending his hand to his now admitted friend.

"And for me, also," said Frank, rising and taking the doctor's outstretched hand.

"In a way, yes," agreed the doctor as they shook hands.

Frank resumed his seat, and the doctor, standing in front of him, looked searchingly into his face. "The world," said he, "must have treated you pretty badly to have made you forget your friends."

"It was not any too kind, I can assure you," said Frank, turning his head to escape the penetrating gaze of the doctor's eyes, for he was beginning to feel decidedly uncomfortable. They asked so many questions he could not answer that he felt considerably relieved when the clock upon the mantel, striking the hour of six, attracted their owner's attention and, with a hurried "Excuse me," he stepped quickly to the door of Mrs. Archer's office, and said:

"You may go now, if you wish, Mrs. Archer."

With a "Thank you, doctor," Mrs. Archer closed the

typewriter down and rose from her desk. The doctor then returned and, stretching himself out upon the couch, gazed with half-closed eyes up at the ceiling.

"So the world has not treated you very well, eh, Frank?" said he musingly. "How is that?"

"You tell me, and I'll tell you. I don't know."

The doctor still continued to keep his eyes on the ceiling as he asked:

"By whom were you employed?"

"My employers were varied and many," satirically replied Frank.

"By that, I should infer, you are not a skilled workman."

"If to do one's work well constitutes a skilled workman, then I have every right to claim to be one," proudly asserted Frank.

"That is true," agreed the doctor. "Are you healthily and helpfully employed now?"

"I regret to state," replied Frank, wondering a little at the doctor's way of expressing himself, "I am not employed at all."

The doctor took his eyes from the ceiling and gravely smiling he turned his head and regarded Frank quizzically. "It has never occurred to you, I suppose," said he, "that what you have just said is an impossibility."

"Lack of employment an impossibility?" exclaimed Frank in surprise. "I should like to believe it was so."

"It is so, just the same," said the doctor, speaking with slow emphasis. "What we call idleness does not exist; it is energy directed diseaseward. All energy is healthy or diseased, helpful or destructive. Waste of energy is when its products are not good but evil. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' By the products shall the healthiness and helpfulness of a man's employment be determined;—they will be healthy or they will be diseased, they will be helpful or they will be destructive."

Mrs. Archer's entrance into the room prohibited Frank's immediate reply. She was dressed for the street and, as both of the men sprang to their feet, she said:

"I am going, doctor, but don't let me disturb you."

"Before you go, however, Mrs. Archer," said the doctor, "permit me to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Thompson. He is the young man whom my car knocked over this morning."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Archer with a smile as she held out her hand to Frank. "How-do-you-do, Mr. Thompson? You feel no bad effects, I trust, from the accident?"

"Fortunately, no," said he, as he released her hand.

"It was, I should say, rather a fortunate accident," said she with a low laugh, "if it numbers you among the doctor's friends."

"I am beginning to think so," said he. "I presume you are listed among them?"

"I should like to believe so," she said a trifle doubtfully. "However, I am not sure that I can boast of that distinction."

"We will not keep you any longer, Mrs. Archer," interposed the doctor, opening the door into the hall. "I know that little son of yours is anxiously waiting for his mother."

"Yes, he is counting the minutes, poor, little man," said she, and with a smile and a nod to each she hurried out. The street door closed upon her, and the doctor returned and, taking his former position upon the couch, said:

"Mrs. Archer is my nurse."

"Indeed," replied Frank indifferently, sitting down in his chair.

"And an excellent one she is, too."

"Yes," replied Frank with the same indifference.

"Now, to come back to you and to your need of employment," said the doctor, turning on his side and regarding Frank smilingly. "Have you ever thought what a vital thing this seeking of employment is in the life of a man? It is a great thing——"

"Indeed, it is a great thing," excitedly interrupted Frank. "I assure you I agree with you there. It is the greatest thing I have so far encountered. It is

marvelously great in its ability to rack and rend a man's soul as no other human device could ever rack and rend his body. So all-absorbing is this great thing's power, man is fast losing his identity with the personal pronoun I, and is rapidly becoming a miserable walking 'it'."

"It is not as bad as all that, surely," said the doctor. "You've never had to look for work, perhaps."

"Oh, yes, I have. In fact, I am always seeking it."

"New patients, you mean?"

"Yes, new patients."

Frank looked over at the doctor and burst out laughing.

"You may laugh," said the doctor, "but, I can assure you, there is nothing funny in the situation."

"I can quite believe it," agreed Frank, still laughing. "How do you go about it?"

"It would take too long to tell you now. Anyway, the knowledge of the method is only gained by those engaged in seeking the work."

"And is, therefore, I suppose, confined to gentleman in your profession."

"My profession is not confined to any special class of individuals. It is one for all classes and by right belongs to the whole world."

"Myself, for instance," said Frank grimly.

"Yes, you. How would you like to enter it?"

"I am too old to think of entering any profession, now," replied Frank, shaking his head.

"You might begin by seeking new patients for me," suggested the doctor.

"That's so," admitted Frank. "But how in the name of common sense should I begin?"

"If you agree to enter my employ, you will simply follow my instructions."

Frank looked over questioningly at the doctor and wondered what the instructions might be and whether he would be able to follow them.

"Think it over," said the doctor rising, "while I telephone down to Mrs. Barstow you are going to take dinner with me."

Frank was still thinking it over when the doctor, who had finished telephoning, laid a hand upon his shoulder, and said:

"Well, my friend, do you agree?"

"Beggars cannot be choosers," said Frank resignedly. "I shall have to."

"That is settled, then," said the doctor. "The terms of the agreement can wait until we have had our dinner," and they proceeded down stairs.

In less than half-an-hour they were through dinner and were mounting the stairs which led to the upper hall. When they entered the office, Doctor Ross, before sitting down, walked over to his desk and pulling

open a drawer at its side drew from it a sheet of paper, which he handed to Frank, who had sat down in a chair nearby.

"Herein," said the doctor, touching the paper with his finger, "are the conditions under which all must work who would enter my employ. Read the first five over carefully, and if you are sure you can, without a doubt, fulfill them, sign your name at the bottom of the page," and the doctor indicated by a wave of his hand the pen and ink upon the desk.

"It is hardly necessary for me to read them," said Frank, "for it is, as I told you, not a matter of choice but of necessity. I must." And he stretched forth his hand for the pen.

"Oh, no, Frank," said the doctor, placing the pen beyond his reach, "that will never do. If you are not interested in the conditions, I am for you; for no man can do good work unless he fully understands the conditions under which he works."

"Conditions, or no conditions," said Frank, as he gave the paper back to the doctor, "I'm not likely to quarrel with my bread and butter."

"We'll see," said the doctor, and he began to read the following:

First—No discrimination must be made in the seeking of patients.

Second—No distinction must be made between patients.

Third—A recognition of the oneness of humanity must be observed.

Fourth—To be willing to execute all instructions.

Fifth—To be satisfied to live one day at a time and to be contented with a sufficiency for that day.

"Is there anything more?" asked Frank when the doctor stopped reading.

"Not for the present. I think you will find what I have read enough to begin on."

"I should say so. When am I to begin?"

"Tomorrow, if you wish," replied the doctor, handing the agreement back to Frank to sign. "Be here not later than nine o'clock tomorrow morning and I will give you your instructions for the day."

"All right," replied Frank, getting up from his seat to reach for the pen. "I'll be here. Here is the signed agreement," and he laid it upon the doctor's desk.

"Very well," said the doctor; and just at that moment the office door opened and Doctor Gordon stepped into the room.

"I'll be with you in a minute, Douglas," said Doctor Ross, rising and closing down his desk. Then turning to Frank, he said:

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me for I have an appointment at eight."

Frank, who had already risen and taken up his hat, nodded comprehendingly and turned to leave.

"Before you go, however," went on the doctor, "I

should be glad if you would write your address on the back of this," and from a nearby table he picked up one of his cards, which he handed to Frank, who, after complying with the request, laid it face upward upon the table. He then made his way toward the door, and, as he did so, the doctor stooped and picked the card up. The address he found written caused him to exclaim, "So you, Frank, are an inmate of Miss Dorothy Richardson's 'home-living place'."

"Yes," said Frank, turning his hand on the door-knob, "I have only been there a few days, though."

"Well, I am glad to know you are so nicely placed. I know Miss Richardson very well, indeed. Douglas," turning to Doctor Gordon, who was regarding Frank with unusual interest, "let me present to you an old friend of mine, Franklin Thompson. You will, no doubt, be interested in him, for he is a new inmate of Dorothy's 'home-living place'."

"Then he is, indeed, fortunate," said Doctor Gordon, his face wearing its usual friendly smile as he stepped over to where Frank stood and shook him warmly by the hand.

"Doctor Gordon," explained Doctor Ross to Frank, "is my brother-in-law."

"You'll have to hurry, Bob," interposed Doctor Gordon in his cheery voice, "if we are going to make that train."

"That's so. Well, good-night, Frank," said Doctor Ross, taking his hat and heavy automobile coat from the rack.

"Good-night," replied Frank, opening and closing the door quietly behind him.

"A new patient?" queried Doctor Gordon as the front door opened and shut.

"No, on the contrary, quite an old one," replied Doctor Ross, buttoning up his coat.

"You never mentioned him to me?" said Doctor Gordon questioningly.

"No, because your remedies would not avail in his case."

"I see," said Doctor Gordon. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," said Doctor Ross, pulling on his gloves, and he led the way to the door.

CHAPTER IX

FRANK KEEPS HIS APPOINTMENT WITH THE DOCTOR

"GOOD-MORNING, Mr. Thompson," said Mrs. Archer, perceiving that gentleman, as she entered, comfortably seated in one of the big, leather chairs in the doctor's office.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Archer," replied Frank, rising from his chair. "I am waiting to see the doctor."

"Have you been waiting long?"

"No, only about five minutes."

"I'm sorry," said she with a smile as she glanced at the clock, "but you'll have to wait ten minutes more. The doctor never gets in before nine."

"I do not object."

"Time is not money to you, then," laughed she, and she walked into her office and took off her hat and long coat, which she hung up on a hook behind the door.

"No," replied he, resuming his seat, "if it were, I should be pretty well-off by this time."

"Or, who can say, worse-off, perhaps," interposed the doctor from the doorway.

"Good-morning, doctor," said Mrs. Archer. "Are you not a few minutes early this morning?"

"No," he said, "it is nine," and added, turning his head in the direction of Frank, "You are on time, I see."

"Yes, I thought it better to be a few minutes too early than a few minutes too late."

"I agree with you," replied the doctor, opening up his desk. "And we'll get right down to business as soon as I have given Mrs. Archer a few instructions about the mail."

Mrs. Archer, in the meantime, had adjusted her cap neatly upon her head, dusted off her desk and laid her note-book and pencils thereupon. She was now ready for work.

The reading of the morning's mail and the dictating of replies thereto took but a short time, and Doctor Ross was soon back again seated in front of his desk. Frank, at his request, drew his chair up close to its side.

As Frank listened to the strangely magnetic, low voice of the doctor, with its soothing, gentle tones, stating the duties of his new employment, the mental atmosphere, in which he had hitherto lived and worked, vanished, and his indifference changed to vital interest as the doctor described the work and the conditions surrounding it. The employment offered, promised a

journey into a delightful country, governed and controlled by a force strange and unknown to him. The instructions given to him were like a new and untried gospel, and the man whose instructions he had agreed to carry out, seemed to belong to a new and different humanity. Strange though it all was and decidedly unlike anything he had ever undertaken before, the work attracted him greatly; and it was only the fear of results that caused him to remain silent for a minute or so after the doctor had finished speaking. Then he exclaimed:

"What you propose, is wonderful! But do you think I can do it?"

"Certainly. What's to prevent you?" replied the doctor, smiling.

"Well, you know," replied Frank doubtfully, "the work is altogether new, and I am fearful of results."

"Although all work is productive of result, you are not asked to make that a consideration," said the doctor, rising and laying his hand in a friendly way upon Frank's shoulder.

"But supposing I am not able to secure patients?" anxiously inquired Frank.

"That is not something for you to consider," replied the doctor, smiling gravely. "Your work is to seek patients and not to secure them. You will have, I promise you, plenty to do."

"No doubt of that," replied Frank, with a sad shake of his head, "for the world is full of sick people."

"That is so," agreed the doctor; "but the lamentable fact is so many of them do not know it. The truth of this you will learn as you progress in your work."

"But where am I to seek these sick patients?" inquired Frank, rising from his chair. "Have you assigned to me any particular location?"

"No. As you said a few moments ago, the world is full of them."

"I am privileged, then," said Frank, with a light laugh, "to seek anywhere and everywhere."

"You are," said the doctor smiling. "But it is only fair, however, to warn you that before you can proceed in this work with any hope of success you must begin with yourself first."

"Begin with myself, first!" exclaimed Frank, scanning the doctor's face with anxious-questioning eyes. "What do you mean? Didn't you tell me, only last night, that there was nothing the matter with me?"

"That is so," calmly replied the doctor; "but then I was speaking of that which makes you recognizable to the rest of humanity,—that is, the physical."

"Of what are you speaking, now?" asked Frank, slightly impatient.

"Of what is really you," answered the doctor, his black eyes glowing in their somber light and his mouth

extending into a tender smile. "The you," his voice dwelling with gentle emphasis on each word, "without which the recognizable could not be. The you, my friend," laying his hands with an indescribable affection upon Frank's shoulders, "which is capable of knowing all things, being all things, and,—is all things."

The doctor stopped and, resuming his seat, looked up smilingly into the face of Frank, whose only response was a mystified shake of the head.

"The you of yourself, Frank," continued the doctor, "about which you know the least. You have been living in the shadow, man, step out into the light."

"I would gladly do so," said Frank hopelessly, "if I could locate the light."

"It is to be found and it waits to be sought," replied the doctor quietly. "Seek it."

"Where?" demanded Frank.

"Within thyself."

"I assure you," replied Frank grimly, "there is naught but darkness within me."

"That is because you will it to be so. It is your acceptation of the meaning of life that renders the light within you darkness. And," sadly, "'Great is that darkness.'"

"Yes, indeed," repeated Frank, wearily sinking into his chair, "great is that darkness."

"And for that reason, my friend," said the doctor,

"you are on the sick list. Sickness is the child of darkness and health is the child of light. Therefore, seek the light. But enough for today. I see it is time," glancing at the clock, "for me to begin my morning calls."

They rose simultaneously, the doctor saying as he took his hat and coat from the rack, "I shall expect you to report the progress you make."

"I will," replied Frank from the doorway. "Good-morning," and he closed the door and went out.

CHAPTER X

MRS. GORDON'S DISCOVERY

SOME time had passed since Frank became an inmate of Dorothy's 'home-living place.' She had seen little of him; he came and went quietly and, with the exception of the occasional 'good-morning' or 'good-evening' they exchanged, no conversation had passed between them. His reticence and evident wish not to intrude, rather pleased her, yet there were moments when she wished it were possible for her to learn something of his life,—if he were happy, how he spent his time and if the conditions in which he lived were, to him, altogether satisfactory. She doubted the wisdom, however, of a greater intimacy, recalling the old and well-worn saying that 'familiarity breeds contempt.' True, she acknowledged, it might not prove so in this particular case. Yet she was not sure and, therefore, was reluctant to say or do that which might bring about an unwished-for result.

That the saying, like many others, might not be true and unworthy of acceptance, did not occur to Dorothy as she sat in her rocking-chair by the window, wonder-

ing as she watched his tall form as it went up the street and disappeared around the corner, if the 'home-living place,' perhaps, was not a trifle lonely for one of his mature years. The loud ringing of the door-bell broke in upon her thoughts, and she heard the voice of Mrs. Gordon asking Bertha, who had hurried to the door, "if Miss Richardson was in?"

"She is, ma'am," replied Bertha, standing at one side to permit her to enter. "You'll find her in the front room."

"All right, I'll find her," and Mrs. Gordon hurried through the hall.

"I'm in here, Margaret," called out Dorothy, rising from her chair and coming to the door.

"So I see," said Mrs. Gordon, leaving a light kiss upon Dorothy's cheek.

"Come and sit down over here," said Dorothy, turning and leading the way to a large, roomy chair not far from the rocking-chair she had been occupying. "But first take off your hat and coat. Why out again so early in the day? Anything new?"

"Not to me," replied Mrs. Gordon, taking the pins out of her hat and laying it on the table, "but, perhaps," handing her coat to Dorothy, who crossed the room and laid it upon the couch, "it may be so to you. Didn't I tell you there was a questionable reason for Mrs. Archer's reticence?"

"You did," admitted Dorothy, returning and seating herself in a chair opposite Mrs. Gordon's. "And you have come over to tell me, I suppose, you have discovered the reason? How did you do it?"

"Quite accidentally, or, perhaps, I should say providentially," replied Mrs. Gordon, establishing herself comfortably in her chair. "An old college chum of mine, Mrs. Leigh of Dawson,—— You have heard me speak of her, I think?——"

"Oh, yes, I do remember, and, at present, she is a patient of Bob's, is she not?"

"Yes. Well, when she came into the city to see him a few days ago, she was amazed to note, upon meeting Mrs. Archer, the remarkable resemblance she bore to an old school-friend of hers, who mysteriously disappeared from home some years ago. She remarked upon the fact while taking luncheon with me the same day and was anxious to learn what I knew about her. I, of course, told her I knew absolutely nothing and that Bob had engaged her when I was away last summer. She then asked if I thought Bob could give her any information? I told her he probably could, if he would, but I doubted very much if he would. This seemed to depress her greatly; for, as she said, it rather increased than allayed her fears. There was a difference, however, she admitted after a while, for Hannah, she thought, would look older than Mrs. Archer ap-

pears to be. I, then, in turn, voiced my suspicions, and questioned Mrs. Leigh closely; but she pleaded to be excused from answering any of my questions,—saying, that if it were possible to find in Mrs. Archer the long-lost Hannah Thompson, she would not want to be the channel through which this news should reach her parents, if, by any chance, there had been, or was now, a reason sufficiently great which, without a doubt, there must be, to keep her from communicating with them. It was only after a long and extended search through this country and abroad that they, she said, finally became reconciled to the belief that her existence upon this earth had ceased. Why then, urged she, disturb that belief, if the daughter, though she be living in some unthought of corner of the globe, wished them to so consider her, knowing, perhaps, that a cause existed which made such a belief best for all concerned? And it was only after much persuasion and argument and after I had promised not to communicate with Hannah's parents in any way, that I prevailed upon her to tell me the name of the town in which they live."

"And, of course, you will not?" asked Dorothy anxiously.

"No," replied Mrs. Gordon with a disagreeable laugh. "I have found it will not be necessary. Mrs. Archer admitted to me this morning that she was Hannah Thompson.

"You forced her confidence?" exclaimed Dorothy incredulously.

"I had to. I have a brother to consider, Dorothy, you forget that."

"And she has a little, blind son to consider," said Dorothy quietly. "Do you forget that?"

"That is her affair and not mine."

"And she has made it wholly hers for the past five years," said Dorothy, in the same quiet tone. "Do you forget that?"

"I have nothing to do with that, Dorothy," impatiently exclaimed Mrs. Gordon. "I must consider my brother."

"Do you think your brother will appreciate such consideration?" asked Dorothy, smiling gravely.

"Bob never appreciates anything that is done for his good," tartly replied Mrs. Gordon.

"Have you told him?"

"No, Mrs. Archer promised me she would tell him and, also, she would immediately leave his employ."

"Will he permit her?"

"He will, if he is not altogether a fool," said Mrs. Gordon angrily.

"I don't believe he will," said Dorothy with a doubtful shake of her head. "Bob is always just."

"It is a strange justice," replied Mrs. Gordon sneeringly, "which would lead him to keep in his employ a

woman of uncertain character, bringing, thereby, not only unmerited censure upon himself, but attracting unkind criticism to every one connected with him. If he does," threateningly, "I shall do what I told her this morning I would do, write to her parents."

"Margaret," exclaimed Dorothy in amazement, "surely you did not resort to such a threat to compel her to admit she was Hannah Thompson!"

"I certainly did."

"Then you have broken your promise?"

"I have done nothing of the kind."

"Not in the letter, perhaps, but you have in the spirit. When Mrs. Leigh exacted that promise from you, she had in mind the protection of the daughter as well as that of the parents. Can't you see in the betrayal of the one you have betrayed all?"

"I cannot," replied Mrs. Gordon decidedly. "People can't do wrong and then expect others to cover up their wrong-doing."

"It isn't always necessary, though," retorted Dorothy, "when it is nicely covered up with good works for someone to come along and uncover it."

"I deemed it wise to do so in this case."

"I can't agree with you," replied Dorothy thoughtfully. "I have always believed Mrs. Archer to be not only a good woman, but a very brave one."

"Good! brave!" exclaimed Mrs. Gordon in disgust.

"Nonsense! What goodness is there to be found in a girl who would run away from a good home and indulgent parents with a man to whom she was not married and live with him in that state until nearly the time her child was born? I fail to see it. And what bravery is there in sneaking into the employ of a reputable physician, hiding her identity with a name not rightly her own?"

"Don't jump at conclusions, Margaret," impatiently said Dorothy. "Appearances, sometimes, are very deceiving. You have no proof that she is other than what I said, 'brave and good.' And, after all, if what you say is true of her, the wrong is her own and in herself only is its redemption. It is not something for you to worry about. Let her do that."

"I am going to, never fear," spiritedly returned Mrs. Gordon. "It is Bob for whom I am concerned."

"Oh, Bob is perfectly capable of taking care of himself, and, in all probability, will not appreciate your interference in his affairs," indifferently replied Dorothy.

"Probably not. Nevertheless, it was necessary.

Dorothy did not immediately reply, but sat gazing thoughtfully out of the window for several moments. Then she asked:

"When is Mrs. Archer expected to convey this disagreeable intelligence to Bob?"

"Tomorrow morning. She is to telephone me the result of the interview at noon."

"And you will, of course, immediately let me know?"

"Surely. But, by the way, how is the 'home-living place' progressing?"

"Fairly well. I have arranged for enlargements."

"You consider the venture a success, then?"

"Well, so far, I have heard no complaints."

"They will come soon enough," thought Mrs. Gordon. Aloud, she said:

"And your new inmate?"

"Oh, he is exceptionally good; he gives so little trouble."

"And you, of course, see as little of him as possible?" anxiously inquired Mrs. Gordon.

"It is not my fault, I can assure you," said Dorothy, smiling maliciously across at Mrs. Gordon, "if I do not see more; it is altogether his, for he meets all of my smiles and kindly greetings with a polite indifference. Without a doubt, Mr. Franklin Thompson is a discreet young man."

"He needs to be," grimly observed Mrs. Gordon as she reached for her hat and put it on, "when he has such a pretty and dainty little person as you are for his landlady."

"Nonsense," laughed Dorothy.

"It is nothing of the kind," retorted Mrs. Gordon,

rising and taking her coat from the couch. "And you lacked discretion when you admitted him into your 'home-living place.'"

"Perhaps I did, Margaret," said Dorothy, still laughing. "But what's your hurry?"

"I must get back to the office before Douglas arrives," and Mrs. Gordon turned and began to walk toward the door.

Dorothy rose and followed her, and when they had reached the door leading into the public hall and she was pushing back the latch, she said:

"You failed to observe, Margaret, that the surname of my new inmate is the same as that which you believe rightly belongs to Mrs. Archer. It would be strange, would it not, if they were related?"

"It would, indeed," replied Mrs. Gordon, stooping to kiss Dorothy, "but I must not stop to talk any more about that. I will telephone you some time tomorrow," she added, and hastened down the stairs.

Dorothy sighed as she closed the door and went back to her room. Mrs. Archer and her affairs had been a source of unusual interest to her for some time past, and she was not a little concerned about the probable outcome of the interview between Bob and his nurse. That Margaret's interference was totally unwarranted and decidedly inexcusable, she knew; but, at the same time, she knew, too, the uselessness of trying to con-

vince her of the fact. Of its possible consequence to the woman and her little child, she did not care; her brother's reputation was he sole consideration. "But was there not something she could do, something which would not offend Margaret?" Dorothy asked of herself as she sat down in the rocking-chair by the window. "Well, she would wait until tomorrow and see what that brought forth, for, until then, she could not do anything, anyway. If Bob did permit her to go, which, she did not think at all likely, she would seek an interview with Mrs. Archer and try to induce her to permit the 'home-living place' to look after her immediate future."

CHAPTER XI

MRS. ARCHER BECOMES HANNAH THOMPSON.

Doctor Ross sat in his chair at his desk and listened gravely to the sad story which Mrs. Archer, sitting on a chair close by, was painfully endeavoring to tell him. Not once did he raise his eyes from the floor to look into her face until she had finished. Then he turned them upon her, and in their depths she read, what she least expected to read, a wonderful sympathy. There was something else, too, for which she could not find a name—— A something which seemed to say so comprehendingly, "I know. I understand." Then putting out both hands he reached over and took her cold, damp ones and held them tightly within his own and, in a gentle, inquiring tone of voice, said:

"What you have told me was a part of yesterday, why burden today with it? It belongs to the past, leave it there."

"I firmly believed I had done so," replied Mrs. Archer, the tears springing to her eyes, "but I was mistaken. And it seems as though it were going to be an ever-present companion of the future."

"Not unless you permit it to be so," replied the doctor, gently releasing her hands. "It is our thoughts of yesterday and of tomorrow which cause us to lose our precious today, neither of which at the present belong to us; for, mourn as we will our regrettable yesterdays, not one of them is ours in which to re-live, and exist only in our memories. If we are honest with today, we shall have no fear of the tomorrow nor regrets to waste upon yesterday."

At the doctor's last words, Mrs. Archer buried her face in her hands and sobbed audibly.

"Come, come, Mrs. Archer," continued the doctor soothingly, "that's a bad way to take my advice. Dry your eyes and proceed with your work."

"Oh, but you do not know," said Mrs. Archer, raising her tear-stained face and trying vainly to control the tears in her voice, "how gladly I would give all of my yesterdays for the privilege of remaining in your employ today."

"I'll be satisfied with your todays," said the doctor gravely, "and I see no reason why you should not continue in my employ."

"Oh, but I have promised——"

"I see, and there is a penalty attached if you do not keep that promise?" interrupted the doctor inquiringly.

"Yes," hesitatingly, "Mrs. Gordon will communicate with my parents."

"No, but you will," said the doctor decidedly.

"I! oh no,——" stammered Mrs. Archer. "I could not,—— You do not understand—— My mother, she, I know, would forgive me, but my father,—he would curse me and wish me dead a thousand times."

"Wishes, good or bad," said the doctor smiling, "have neither the power to mend nor to break bones. However, this is the demand of today and you must meet it, let the consequence be what it may. Supposing, in your place, grown to manhood, stood little Ronald, who had offended society, perhaps not just in the way you have but in some other quite as grievous, would you wish him to obliviate himself and permit you to believe him dead when he was living and in need of the love and protection his mother could give him? I think not. No matter what the transgression, he would still be your son, your little man, your baby Ronald, and you would love him in spite of anything he would or could do. Come now, be fair with yourself, is it not rather a question of pride on your part than consideration for your parents?"

"Perhaps it is," reluctantly acknowledged Mrs. Archer. "But you don't know what I was to them. They," her voice breaking, "idolized me."

"And you don't want them to know their idol has fallen, is that it? And yet that is the fate of all idols."

"I wish to spare them, if I can, the keen disappoint-

ment and utter humiliation which the knowledge of my living would bring to them."

"You are not treating them fairly," said the doctor rising. "You are rendering a verdict without a hearing of both side of the case."

"If so," said she, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands, it is because I am so sure of the verdict. You see," despairingly, "the circumstances are such that I cannot believe any other possible."

"Why not?" demanded the doctor. "Do you think that love is such a miserable, weak and puny thing that it can be hedged in by the world's fence of respectability? And are you the only one, starting on the road of a mistaken love, who has turned a deaf ear to the voice of consequence when he has pleaded to be heard and regarded with blinded eyes the presence of his twin-brother, caution; and who, today, awakened too late to the inexorable and unpleasant fact that consequence is no longer to be considered an ally if caution be ignored, but an unconquerable and stubborn enemy, bemoan the deafness and blindness of yesterday? And are you the only one who has unfortunately committed what society publicly considers the unpardonable sin, and which she so loudly denounces; but which, privately, she so often condones and seeks to hide and tries so hard to forget? Are you?"

"No."

"Then write to your parents and tell them the truth."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Archer, shrinking piteously down in her chair, "that I cannot do."

"You are willing, then, to go further and let consequence make a coward of you?" queried the doctor. "You are very foolish, for I can assure you there is no safety in the obscurity of a lie."

"I cannot help it," replied she despairingly, "I am afraid! I am afraid!"

"And of what are you afraid?" asked he scornfully, beginning to pace up and down the room. "The judgment of a sinful man and woman, parents though they be? It is imperfection passing judgment upon imperfection. It is sin calling to sin in terms of censure or praise. Can't you see that all such judgment is limited, and for that reason cannot in its nature be true, but is bound to err? That is, all human judgment is never errorless and should, therefore, never be passed by the human family upon its individual members,—and that the rising or falling of man is wholly dependent upon the judgment he passes upon his individual self, and with him abides the consequence of a true or false verdict.

As the doctor was speaking, Mrs. Archer's face lost somewhat its look of pathetic hopelessness, and there came into it one of astonishment and not a little alarm as her big eyes in wide open amazement followed him

as he walked toward the window. When he had finished, however, and come back and stood in front of her, an expression of understanding had taken possession and, smiling sadly, she nodded comprehendingly up at him and said:

"You are right, doctor, and I am wrong. I will write to my parents tonight."

"Good!" exclaimed the doctor, his grave face lightening up with a smile she had never before seen it wear. "Bathe your face and put your cap on," continued he, taking her hands and raising her to her feet, "and get ready for work, for the correspondence," waving his hand toward a pile of unopened letters and papers lying upon his desk, "is unusually large."

The doctor sat down at his desk and Mrs. Archer, her mind inexpressibly relieved, hurried in to her office and prepared herself and desk for work. Never before in the past years of her life had she felt so lighthearted, so absolutely free. The words of the doctor as he retraced his steps from the window remained with her. What a relief it was to know the only condemnation she had really to fear was her own; that she alone was her judge, and that her standing or falling was determined by that judgment. All that others might say or do could not make one hair black or white, could not change the real Hannah Thompson one iota; the responsibility was hers and could not be

ignored, and whether she would or no, she would, at some time or other, be forced out into the open to render a verdict for or against herself.

While these thoughts were occupying Mrs. Archer's mind, the doctor was busily engaged in the examination of his mail, marking the most important communications for reply and leaving the others for some time later in the day. Then he took his hat and coat from the rack and, throwing the latter over his arm and holding the former in his hand, he walked into Mrs. Archer's office, and said:

"Before attending to the mail, get that letter off to your parents."

"I will," she replied.

"And your name?" he queried.

"Will be Hannah Thompson," she answered.

"I am glad that is your decision," said he with an approving smile.

"Well," putting on his coat, "I must be off. If Thompson comes in, please ask him to wait."

"I will," said she, and the doctor hurried out.

She waited until she heard the street-door close behind him, and then took a sheet of paper from a drawer and inserted it into the typewriter and unhesitatingly began to write the letter to her father and mother. It read:

40 Osborne Avenue, Littletown.

Dear Father and Mother:

This letter, I know, will come to you as a great surprise and terrible shock, believing, as you must now do, that I have long ceased to be numbered among the living in the world. My disappearance from home and my silence during the past six years I shall not attempt to explain in this letter; it would take too long and cause you suffering. Suffice to say I thought it best. Conditions have arisen, however, which make it impossible for me to wish to keep you a moment longer in ignorance of my whereabouts, and write to ask you to come and see me as soon as possible, when I will tell you the story of those sad, yet profitable, years. Lovingly your daughter,

HANNAH.

When the letter was finished and placed in an envelope, sealed and stamped, and addressed to Mrs. Franklin Thompson, Dawson, N. Y., she arose and took off her cap and, taking her long, black coat from a nail at the back of the door, put it on and went out and dropped the letter in the mail-box a few doors from the house.

CHAPTER XII

FRANK'S INDISPOSITION AND A TELEPHONE CALL FROM MRS. GORDON

"HAVE you been waiting long?" inquired the doctor, who had returned from making his morning calls upon his patients.

"About half-an-hour, I guess," replied Frank from his chair by the window.

"Oh, that isn't very long," said the doctor, hanging up his coat and hat.

"No," agreed Frank. "I haven't noticed the time, for I have been so interested in observing the faces of the men and women who have passed here. It seems strange, too, for I never paid much attention to people before, nor noticed closely the faces of those I met."

"Never took the time, I suppose," said the doctor, stretching himself out upon the couch.

"No, it wasn't that; it was more a matter of indifference, I think," replied Frank, rising and leaving the window and seating himself in a chair nearer the doctor.

"And what makes the difference, now?"

"I don't know, unless it is the work I'm engaged in," replied Frank smiling.

"I see," said the doctor laughing, "every face means a prospective patient. What success have you had, so far?"

"Not any. All those I have spoken to insist they are perfectly well and have no need of a physician."

"But what about yourself, Frank?" asked the doctor earnestly.

"Well," said Frank, hanging his head sheepishly, "my pursuit for patients has made me aware that I am not altogether well and have quite a few disorders."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the doctor. "What are the symptoms? How do they affect you?"

"Well, I can't say," replied Frank, speaking slowly, "that the symptoms are so marked, but that may be because they are so prevalent. Nevertheless, they are none the less revolutionary."

"You mean," queried the doctor, "they defy all remedial agents?"

"I don't know as I should put it that way," replied Frank. "Perhaps the right remedy has not been applied."

"Can you think of any to suggest?"

"No, I don't know as I can."

"And you want me to prescribe a remedy, is that it?" asked the doctor with a quizzical look.

"If you can prescribe the right one, I certainly do."

"In the seeking of patients, you will find it yourself. I can prescribe no other. To know you are sick is a great step toward becoming well, but to be ignorant of sickness is to court death."

"Oh, I don't want to leave the impression," said Frank, laughing, "that I am very ill. I just feel kind of out of sorts."

"Oh, is that all?" said the doctor, rising in response to the ring of the telephone-bell. "Well, just continue in your pursuit of patients."

"Hallo," said he, when he reached the telephone and held the receiver to his ear, "who is this?"

"It is I, Bob," said the voice of Mrs. Gordon. "Is Mrs. Archer there?"

"No," replied the doctor, "she left this morning. Miss Thompson is here, though. Would you like to speak to her?"

There was no answer for several seconds, and the doctor laughed inwardly at what he imagined must be his sister's discomfiture. Then, rather undecidedly, she said, "Y-e-s, I guess so."

"Miss Thompson," called the doctor, "Mrs. Gordon has called up and would like to speak to you."

"I'll be right there, doctor," responded Mrs. Archer, or Hannah Thompson, as we shall now begin to call her, and rising from her desk she came hurriedly to the

telephone and took the receiver from the doctor's hand. And he, instead of going back to the couch, as she expected he would do, stood quietly beside her to catch the words of his sister as they came over the wire.

"What does this mean?" asked she imperatively. "And why did you not telephone me as you agreed?"

"It means," replied Hannah, "that your brother has shown me the folly of such a course and induced me to forsake it."

"I see," replied Mrs. Gordon sarcastically, "and you, now, of course, have no intention of leaving his employ. Well, I shall do what I said I would, 'write to your parents.'"

"That will not be necessary," replied Hannah triumphantly, "for I have already written to them."

"Even so," said Mrs. Gordon angrily, "can't you see that, although it may mean your salvation, your presence in my brother's office can only prove ruinous to his reputation and practice? Surely you cannot desire either?"

Before Hannah could reply, the receiver was taken from her hand and the doctor, motioning her to one side, took up the conversation with his sister, and Hannah, glad to escape, went back to her office.

"This is a question which I must answer, Margaret," said the doctor emphatically, "for it is one with which Miss Thompson has nothing to do, she being in no way

responsible for my reputation or practice; I, alone, am answerable for their indestructibility."

"Indeed," retorted Mrs. Gordon sneeringly. Then I should think you would take some better means of preserving them than that of retaining a woman of questionable character in your office,—no matter in what capacity. If you persist in doing so, I warn you that I shall consider all relationship between us at an end, and you will cease to be my brother and I your sister. The cause of the outcast you have made yours; therefore, the conditions which govern the life of the outcast must be yours also,—which is to be pitied but never loved, to be suffered but never sanctioned, to be numbered, forever and always, as she is, among the world's undesirables."

"I can stand it, if you can," replied the doctor, his face darkening. "However, I am afraid my loss will hardly be your gain. That you may thrust me out, is true; but who can say what day shall not witness your departure from the city of comfort and ease for the valley of loneliness; only, in due time, to be driven therefrom, by its gray skies, its mournful surroundings and the low-moaning chant of its inhabitants, to the plains of despair, whose ever-extending, terrifying distances compel you, later on, to flee then for the mountain of impossibility, from which, in painful perplexity,

you turn and arrive at last in the wilderness of no-way-out."

"Stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Gordon impatiently. "If you are not very careful, you will live to fulfill your own prediction."

"We shall see," replied the doctor.

"So we shall," returned she sharply. "But surely, Bob," pleadingly, "there are plenty of nurses of good character and with blameless pasts whose services you could secure and who would be as capable as Hannah Thompson. Why, therefore, do you persist in keeping her?"

"Because I am a physician," replied the doctor decisively, "and 'they that are whole need not a physician.'"

An angry click from the other end of the wire was the only response the doctor received. Sighing, he placed the receiver back on its hook and turned slowly from the telephone, saying to himself as he did so, "Poor Margaret, I wonder how long it will be before the truth of the words, the sin of omission oft-times makes the sin of commission possible, penetrates through that conventional shell of yours." Then stepping over to where Frank sat, a silent and amazed listener, not dreaming of the relationship that existed between him and Hannah and which later was to be revealed, he said:

"That would be a good patient for you to seek, Frank. We will discuss it further," smiling gravely at the look of dismay that o'erspread Frank's face, "downstairs at the table, for you, of course, are going to stay and take luncheon with me."

"I should be very glad to do the latter," replied Frank, rising from his chair, "but," throwing his hands impotently out, "to attempt the former is too great an undertaking for me to think about."

"We'll decide that later," said the doctor, walking over to the wash-bowl and washing his hands.

CHAPTER XIII

MRS. THOMPSON VISITS HER DAUGHTER

"IT is I, Martha," said Mrs. Thompson to the much surprised and frightened negress who opened the door in response to her ring of the bell, and who now stood petrified in the doorway. "It's all right, Miss Hannah expects me," continued she assuringly, gently pushing the door open and stepping into the hall, "I received a letter from her this morning. Is she in?"

"N-o,—m-a-a-m,—" gaspeh Martha, leaning weakly and wide-eyed against the wall.

"Will she be in soon?"

"No,—yes,—I—don't—know—" stammered Martha, not knowing just what her mistress would have her say.

"Well, just close the door," said Mrs. Thompson, smiling understandingly, "and I will go in here and wait," and she turned toward a door standing partly open, in which room Ronald lay asleep upon a couch.

"Dat room am oc'i'pied, ma'am,'" said Martha, now wonderfully alert, and brushing quickly past she pulled the door to. Not for worlds, if she could help it, should

Mrs. Thompson see her grandson without his mother's knowledge and consent.

"Oh, I see, then show me into Miss Hannah's room."

"Yes, ma'am," said Martha, stepping back to close the front-door and then leading the way to a room at the end of the short and narrow hall, the door of which stood wide open. "Dis am Miss Hannah's room."

"Thank you, Martha," said Mrs. Thompson, entering and seating herself in the only comfortable chair the room contained. "Do you think I'll have to wait very long?"

"Don' know, ma'am, can't say," replied the noncommittal Martha, her bent form and grizzled head retreating down the hall. When she reached the door of the room in which Ronald slept, she stopped, and noiselessly pushed it open. Entering, she tiptoed quietly over to the couch upon which he was lying and gently picked up a little hand which had strayed from under the covers and placed it back again. Then with a doleful shake of the head she murmured:

"Its don' come at las', honey, as I s'pected it would, and der's noddin' to do but to let yo' mammy know,—but how? Can't use dat tel'phone in mammy's room, cause she hear all I say. Noddin' to do but go downstairs," switching off her apron and pulling down her sleeves. "Reckon yo' wake up 'fore I gets back?" queried she anxiously as she reached the door. "Don'

do dat, honey, nohow, Marta'll be right back," and she drew the door softly to behind her.

However, Martha had hardly reached the foot of the stairs before Ronald began to stir and was soon wide awake. Stretching his little arms, in baby-fashion, over his head, he laid quietly so for several moments. Then, lowering them, he pushed down the covers and sat up and, turning sideways, rolled over on his stomach and slipped to the floor, where he stood and began to call, "Marta, Marta, I awake! I awake, Marta!" Getting no response, the little fellow, with wondering face, felt his way with his baby-hands to the door and, finding the knob, turned it and pulled the door open and went into the hall, all the time calling plaintively, "Marta, Marta, I awake! I awake, Marta." But there came no answer from Martha, and the look of wonder on the face of the child became one of fear, for never before in his short life had Martha failed to hasten to him or to answer his first call. Standing there, he vainly listened for half-a-minute for a sound which would locate to his baby-hearing Martha's whereabouts, and then slowly groped his way through the hall to his mother's room, crying pitifully all the while, "Marta, Marta, I awake! I awake, Marta!"

When he reached the doorway, Mrs. Thompson, ignorant of the child's lack of vision, with smiling assurance beckoned him to come to her, to which invita-

tion, to her surprise, he paid not the least attention, although his eyes appeared fixed upon her. Then she arose, and the faint sound of her swaying garments as she walked toward him, seemed, in a measure, to reassure the now thoroughly frightened child, who could hear but see nothing; for he immediately stopped crying and, putting out his baby-hands in a self-protecting sort of way, moved slowly toward the direction of the sound, saying in a reproachful, enquiring tone:

"Why don't you speak to me, Marta?"

"I am not Martha, dear," said Mrs. Thompson soothingly, not wishing to startle the child whose question and movements now made his blindness evident. "Martha has gone out, I think, but she will soon be back," quickly added she, very gently taking one of the little extended hands and holding it within her own.

"Where's Marta gone?" asked Ronald, again beginning to cry and reluctantly permitting Mrs. Thompson to lead him back to her chair.

"I do not know," replied Mrs. Thompson, sitting down in her chair and lifting Ronald upon her lap. "Anyway, you are not going to cry, are you? She has gone, I rather suspect, to telephone."

"Why didn't she tel'phone with mother's tel'phone?" asked Ronald, sitting straight up on her lap.

"And who is mother, little man?"

"My mother is Mrs. Archer."

"And where is mother's telephone?"

"In here; this is mother's room."

"You are mistaken, I think, dear. Martha told me this was my daughter's room, and her name is Thompson."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Ronald. "I 'faid you're in the w'ong 'partment. Only mother, Marta and I live here."

The arms which held the child relaxed and a troubled look came into the eyes that were now closely scanning the little, blind face. "Was it possible that this, then, was the explanation?" she anxiously asked herself. "Was this little, blind boy sitting on her lap Hannah's child, and his being spoke of something that should not have been?" She had not even dreamed of this. Every other misfortune that it was possible to imagine she had thought of; but this,—it was too dreadful——

Very gently she put Ronald down upon the floor, where he stood at her knee, and feeling strangely faint and ill leaned back in her chair. "What would her father say?" She dreaded to think of the effect the intelligence would have upon him, and the duty of imparting it she devoutly wished lay with someone other than herself. True, this same thing had happened heretofore and would happen again to other people's daughters; but that it should have befallen their Hannah was inconceivable—— But, perhaps,

after all, it was not so and she had been too hasty in arriving at a conclusion. She would wait.

She had not to wait very long for the confirmation of her fears; for Ronald, hearing the opening of the hall-door accompanied by hurrying footsteps, called out, as he moved slowly away from her knee toward the door, "Marta, I'm in here with the stwange lady. Did you go out to tel'phone mother?"

"What made yo' t'ink I tel'phone, yo' little ra'cal?" laughed Martha, rushing to him as he stood in the doorway.

"Lady said she s'pected so," replied Ronald as Martha picked him up in her arms and started to carry him out to the kitchen. "Is mother's tel'phone out of order?"

"Hush!" whispered Martha.

"Why must I——," but the rest of the question was lost in the black hand which gently covered his mouth.

An hour of waiting elapsed—an hour of indescribable mental agony for Mrs. Thompson—before Hannah threw open the hall-door and, leaving it open, rushed in. At the sound of the hurrying steps, Mrs. Thompson rose unsteadily to her feet. A momentary glance, that was all, and without a word uttered by either, mother and daughter were in each other's arms. There were no tears, no cries, no heart-broken sobs; naught but an overwhelming silence. At last, the trembling

of her mother's body recalled Hannah's power of speech and, tenderly unclasping her mother's arms from about her and placing her gently back in her chair, she said:

"Poor mother, this indeed has been a terrible shock to you."

At these words, spoken by the voice of her daughter, a voice not heard by her for so many years, Mrs. Thompson's eyes filled with tears and, as she continued to gaze speechlessly upon the face of her child, ran unregarded down her cheeks.

Censure, Hannah could have borne; coldness or unkind words she could have met calmly, but tears—that rain of tears—and the infinite love and sorrow expressed in those tears, were too much, and broke down and swept away, as though it had never been there, the wall of human error which she had permitted to separate her from her mother for the past six years. Gone they were,—and with a great sobbing sigh she fell down upon her knees at the side of her mother and laid her head in her lap much as she had been wont to do when a child. Soothingly, the mother's hand passed over the light-brown hair, and in its touch was manifested that wonderful, but indescribable thing, the oneness of mother and child.

At last the soothing, stroking motion ceased, and two

soft hands were placed under Hannah's chin and caused her to slowly raise her head.

"Why did you not come and make known your troubles to your mother, my child?" asked Mrs. Thompson, looking compassionately down into the pitiful, working face.

"I could not then," chokingly replied Hannah, rising to her feet and feeling in her coat pocket for her handkerchief, with which she wiped the tears from her face. "My one thought, at that time," taking the pins out of her mother's hat and laying it over on the couch, "was to hide myself from all those who had known me and I had known. I believed, then," helping her mother off with her coat and placing it under the hat, "my duty was to obliterate myself and thus spare you and father the humiliating sorrow of knowing the miserable mistake I had made."

Mrs. Thompson sighed and leaned back in her chair.

"And what of your mother?" she asked, as Hannah took off her own hat and coat and hung them up on a hook in the wardrobe which stood in a corner of the room. "Did you think it possible that she could so completely shut you out of her heart? And what right had you to deny me the privilege of sharing and bearing with you the consequence of your acts?"

Hannah moved a chair nearer her mother's and sat down.

"I could not, then, mother, I simply could not," replied she, putting her hand up and taking the one her mother was about to lay upon her shoulder and holding it firmly between her own in her lap. "That it was wrong, I now fully realize; and that you and father were not acquainted, long ago, with the fact that David Haven and myself had determined upon entering into a trial marriage, I shall always regret. That we were both young, may, perhaps, be some excuse, I do not know, for wishing to take an untried and forbidden road in our quest for happiness. Because what we had decided upon was the exceptional, we both argued, it need not, necessarily, result unhappily. But, unfortunately, it did; the way we took was too broad and we lost each other. And it was such a greedy thoroughfare, mother; its demands were so heavy that they who lingered there were never able to meet its bills. Your youth, never more to be regained, you left there. Your good name it swallowed up, and you searched in vain to find it. It would take all that you possessed, and then, grinning, leave you standing helpless and alone."

"My poor Hannah," said Mrs. Thompson consolingly.

"In a way, yes," agreed Hannah. "But it did not rob me of all; I started back in time to keep my child. Have you seen him?"

"Yes, he found his way in here when he failed to find Martha upon waking up."

"Dear little man, it was the first time she ever left him, unless it was with me. Good, old Martha, but for her I do not know what I should have done. From the night I left home, when she followed me, and in order to prevent a scene at the depot we were forced to take her with us, she has served me faithfully and well."

"Oh, yes," smiled Mrs. Thompson, "there never was any doubt in my mind that where we should find you we also should find Martha."

Hannah smiled and got up.

"I must go out and announce myself to Ronald," she said, "or he will be terribly disappointed."

"Yes, do, and bring him in and introduce him to his grandmother."

"Perhaps you would like to come with me," suggested Hannah.

"No, I do not want to trouble Martha needlessly. She, no doubt, is preparing luncheon."

"Very well, I'll be right back," and Hannah's steps quickened as she passed into the hall.

Pretty soon she came back carrying Ronald, and Mrs. Thompson held out her arms for the child.

"Ronald," said his mother, "I am going to present you to your grandmother, and I want you to love her as much as you do mother."

"What is g'andmother, mother?" asked Ronald as Hannah placed him in Mrs. Thompson's arms.

"Your mother's mother, honey-boy."

"Do you yuv her, mother?" asked he, sitting straight up on his grandmother's lap.

"Why, of course, little man."

"Then I yuv her," said Ronald, getting to his knees on her lap, and Mrs. Thompson felt the pressure of two little arms about her neck and a curly-head pressed close to her own. For several moments, while his mother stood silently looking on, his grandmother held him tightly within her arms. Then Ronald, bent upon investigation, threw back his head and withdrew his arms from around her neck and began to pass his hands slowly over her face.

"You're bootiful, too," he said finally, straightening out his legs and establishing himself more comfortably upon her lap.

"You think so?" inquired Mrs. Thompson, into whose eyes the tears were coming; and it was only the prompt intervention of Hannah's handkerchief which prevented their overflow. With a downward, warning shake of her head in the direction of the child, his mother wiped the tears away, saying brightly, at the same time, to conceal from her boy her own and her mother's agitation,—

"Your grandmother, I am sure, thanks you for the compliment, little son."

"But I fink you are, too, mother."

"Of course, darling," laughed Hannah, "and mother is not at all jealous. She is perfectly willing to share your baby-heart with grandmother."

But Ronald, apparently, was not of the same mind and objected, somewhat, to having his affections thus dispensed with; for, squirming around, he turned his back upon his grandmother and, stretching his little arms upwards to where he believed his mother stood, he said:

"Come and take me."

"In a little while, darling," said Hannah, falling down upon her knees on the rug by the side of her mother and taking her boy's hand within her own; "but mother has something else to say to her little man, first. You see, dear, grandmother has never had a little boy to love or to love her, and it is a long, long time since she had a little girl. "Mother was her little girl, but she grew up and forgot about it. Grandmother did not—and now, because you belong to that little girl, she loves you and not only gives you the place that that little girl occupied, but has made a brand-new place in her heart for you. You and I, babykin, must live to be worthy of that brand-new place, for in no heart but a mother's are we able to find it. And, darling, mother

wants you to know when you are loving grandmother she will feel you are doubly loving her."

"You mean," said Ronald slowly, "if I yuv g'andmother, I yuv you two times."

"Yes, little man, that is just what mother means."

Just at that moment Martha came through the hall.

"Lunch is served, ma'am," she said.

"Very well, Martha," replied Hannah, "come and get Ronald;" and picking up her boy from her mother's lap she placed him in Martha's arms, and, as she carried him out, Mrs. Thompson rose to her feet.

"He is a dear, little fellow," said she, "but how pathetically sad it is that he is blind."

"It is, indeed," replied her daughter; "but," musingly, "do you know, sometimes I am rather glad that he is blind for, consequently, much of the evil of the world he will escape."

"That is true," agreed her mother; "but, likewise, how many of its beauties he must forego."

"That is so, of course," said her daughter with a sigh. "However, I try to find consolation in the thought that what he has not seen he cannot miss."

"Is his blindness, then, so permanently hopeless?"

"Doctor Ross does not think so."

"I am glad to hear that. Who is Doctor Ross?"

"A wonderful man and an excellent physician. I am employed by him as correspondent and office-nurse."

"That is strange, I have never heard of him."

"I thought you might have heard something about him from Mrs. George Leigh, for he is her physician."

"Then you know of George's marriage," said Mrs. Thompson, a note of sympathy in her voice as she followed her daughter into the hall. "He married less than two years ago your old friend and schoolmate, Elizabeth Sand.

"I know it. Indeed, my communicating with you and father was due indirectly to a visit she paid to the doctor's office one morning. I will tell you all about it after we have had luncheon."

They entered the dining-room where they found Ronald seated in his high-chair at the table. Martha, just a few moments before, had placed in front of him a bowl partly filled with chicken soup, which, hungry though he was, he made no attempt to eat, but sat patiently waiting for his mother and the "stwange lady," as he persisted in calling his grandmother when he spoke of her to Martha, to come in and sit down at the table. He clapped his tiny hands as they came into the room.

"You may begin now, darling, here is your spoon," said his mother, picking up a spoon which lay at the side of his bowl and putting it in his hand. "You may sit here, mother," continued she, drawing out a chair from one side of the table, "and," by a movement of

her hand indicating a chair at the opposite side, "I will sit over there."

In less than half an hour they had finished eating their luncheon, and Mrs. Thompson was back again in the little room at the end of the hall, Hannah having stopped outside for a few minutes to superintend the dressing of Ronald, whom Martha was going to take out for a short walk, his mother thinking it wise to so dispose of him while she talked with her mother.

Mrs. Thompson surveyed the little room with its meagre furnishings, and sadly contrasted it with one handsomely furnished now unoccupied at Dawson—Hannah's room. Her heart ached for this girl of hers, and she longed to see her once more in possession of her old room with its attendant luxuries; and she wished it were possible to take Hannah, with Ronald and Martha, home with her that night. But she could not. Her father must first be told the truth, and then decide. That he would not close the door of his home against his child, she felt certain; and that for her it would always stand open. But the child—— To him, she was afraid, the door would remain forever shut, and his mother, she knew, and was glad to know, was too much of a woman to accept for herself that which her child could not have. "Poor, innocent, little, blind baby," thought she, "how cruel it was that he should have to suffer the evil consequences of the acts of

others, and that upon his baby-head and frail shoulders should fall the effects of their wrong-doing."

Hannah's advancing footsteps in the hall put a stop to these gloomy thoughts, and Mrs. Thompson greeted the entrance of her daughter with a smile.

"They have gone?" queried she.

"Yes, and if I am to finish my story before they get back, I must begin right away," replied Hannah, drawing a chair forward and sitting down near her mother.

"Is it necessary, my child?" asked Mrs. Thompson, laying her hand affectionately upon her daughter's shoulder. "Would it not be better to leave the distressing happenings of the past six years where they belong—away back there? Surely they have no place in the present and can have none in the future, and the telling really cannot benefit either of us, now, serving only to add to your embarrassment and pain. Let us, then, turn our backs upon them and leave them behind."

"I see you agree with Doctor Ross. It is very good of you to think so about it, mother, but what about father?"

"I shall have to tell him what I know, of course," replied Mrs. Thompson, a shadow for the moment passing over her face, "and what the outcome may be I cannot say. However, I will write you about that

tomorrow and, at the same time, enclose a check to cover your expenses here."

"That is very kind of you."

"Now tell me something of your work, if you are happy in it and of this Doctor Ross by whom you are employed," said Mrs. Thompson, looking at her watch. "You won't have a great deal of time for I must leave on the three-thirty train."

This, to Hannah, was a particularly agreeable task, and it was not long before she was relating, with no little degree of interest expressed in face and voice, the many pleasing features of her work; and speaking in eloquent praise of the man who had made that work possible—the Great Worker, her employer. So truly happy did she appear as she continued to talk, that her mother, whose heart had ached at the thought of leaving her and Ronald in what she termed "the depressing loneliness of a large city," became more and more reconciled with the situation; and when, an hour later, she bade them goodby at the station, it was with a mind assured that for the present, at least, all was well with her Hannah.

CHAPTER XIV

A TALK WITH DOROTHY AND THE SELECTION OF ROADS

The loud ringing of the telephone-bell greeted Hannah when she opened the office-door the morning after her mother's visit. Stepping quickly over to the telephone, she took down the receiver and held it to her ear, and a voice in response to her gentle, "Hello," said:

"Good-morning, Mrs. Archer; this is Miss Richardson. Has the doctor arrived?"

"Oh, good-morning, Miss Richardson," returned Hannah pleasantly. "No, the doctor has not come in. I expect him any moment, though. Can I do anything for you?"

"Well, I don't know," replied Dorothy a trifle slowly "perhaps you can; my message in a way concerns you. Last night, while speaking to Mr. Thompson on his way out, he told me you were not in the office all of yesterday afternoon; and, although he waited all that time for the doctor to come in, he, too, failed to put in an appearance, and he had to leave without seeing him. Foolishly, I then began to worry and wondered if everything was as it should be over there."

"Oh, yes," replied Hannah, laughing happily, "everything is all right."

"I am glad to hear it," responded Dorothy heartily. "But if it ever should not be, remember my 'home-living place' will always be open to you and Ronald."

"You are very kind, I shall remember that," said Hannah, and just at that moment Doctor Ross pushed the door open and walked into the room, which caused her to add, "Oh, here is the doctor, now, wouldn't you like to speak to him?"

"Why, yes, you might let me say good-morning to him."

"Doctor," said Hannah, turning her head in his direction and smiling, "Miss Richardson is on the telephone and would like to speak to you."

"Is that so?" replied the doctor, much pleased, striding over to the telephone and taking the receiver out of her hand.

"Good-morning, Dorothy," said he, and Hannah hurried into her office and closed the door.

"Good-morning, Bob," came Dorothy's voice from the other end of the wire. "How is everything over there? I have been hearing bad news of your office. Is Mrs. Archer to remain with you?"

"Not Mrs. Archer," replied the doctor with a low laugh, "but a young woman by the name of Miss Hannah Thompson is."

"I see," and the tone of her voice conveyed more to the doctor than Dorothy intended.

"No you don't, but you will some day," replied he teasingly.

"Is that so?" retorted she.

"That is just so," laughed he. "However, don't despair, for with time all things are accomplished."

"Even the perfection of me?"

"Yes, the perfection of you."

"Bosh!"

"No bosh about it, I assure you, Dorothy. It is a certain and assured fact."

"I am glad you feel so positive about it."

"And you don't?"

"No, I wish I did."

"How is that? Isn't the 'home-living place' progressing satisfactorily?"

"Well," reluctantly replied Dorothy, "I am beginning to have difficulties."

"I see," said the doctor sympathetically, "it is not proving the success you hoped for. That is too bad, Dorothy. Can I be of any assistance?"

"I don't know, perhaps you can. Supposing you call in on your way back from the hospital this afternoon. There are quite a few things I want to talk over with you."

"I can't this afternoon, Dorothy," said the doctor

regretfully, "for I have an engagement with Thompson. But I can call in and see you tomorrow morning, if that will do."

"Yes, that will suit me very nicely."

"Very well, I'll be in some time between eleven and twelve."

"Thank you, Bob."

"Not at all, Dorothy. It is always my delight and pleasure, as you know, to serve you."

"It is very good of you, Bob; and I won't keep you any longer for I know just how busy you always are. Goodby."

"Goodby, Dorothy," returned the doctor, and the smile that played around his lips was infinitely tender as he hung up the receiver on its hook and turned from the instrument.

Before sitting down at his desk to examine his mail, he walked to the door of Hannah's office and knocked gently, and in response to her pleasant, "Come in," turned the knob and entered the room.

"Well," said he, smiling in a grave, mischievous fashion at Hannah, who was seated in front of her desk, "I see you are still alive. The ordeal of yesterday afternoon, which you dreaded so, could not have proven such a terrible thing, after all."

"Oh, no," said Hannah, her face alight, "it proved to be no ordeal at all. Do you know, although I have

a child of my own, I never before realized how wonderfully wonderful is the love of a mother for her child."

"Yes," replied the doctor, sitting down in a chair opposite Hannah, "it is wonderful for its rare unselfishness. And yet," musingly, "in its unselfishness it is selfish. The love a mother bears for her child is the love for a reproduced self; in it she sees the continuing of that self. And her love, in spite of its boasted depth and breadth and inexhaustible store, is limited; and the child is not very old before he becomes sadly aware of its limitations. To her only is given the provision of the physical needs, and just so far and no farther is she able to travel the journey of life with him. The way of the spirit, he must travel alone, picking from its roadside those fruits needed to satisfy that hunger. To meet every awakened desire of the soul, means the pushing onward and upward until their source is found."

"Surely," exclaimed Hannah in surprise, "you don't mean me to conclude that mothers are not anxious to have their children grow up to be good men and women?"

"Their anxiety goes for naught, if they know not the road to Good. Many and many are the roads called by that name——"

"And terminate, I suppose you are going to say," interrupted Hannah, "in the broad and well-known thoroughfare of Bad?"

The doctor nodded.

"What assurance, then," anxiously asked Hannah, "has a mother that she has selected from these many roads the way to Good, when there are so many conflicting opinions of what is good and what is bad?"

"By their fruits, there is no other way," quietly replied the doctor. "It is not difficult," he went on, "to avoid taking some of these roads; nor is it necessary for one to traverse them to know the fruits which grow therein, for their decadent effects are voicelessly proclaimed by the poor, unfortunate sojourners within their gates. But about the many others we stop and question— At the entrance of each we look long and interrogatively in; and they appear to us alike fair. But, try as we may, we are unable to see, for the huge trees, heavy foliage and beautiful flowers growing at their mouths, the hills and valleys beyond. After some serious debating upon the advisability of taking either of them, we at last decide upon a road. It is, to our mind, the fairest of them all and, to our imagination, promises at the end great things. Surely success awaits us at the end of this road. And so we begin our journey——

"But alas! One-quarter of the way has not been

travelled before we become aware, to our utter dismay, that all that was fair and lovely of the chosen road was the entrance. We bewail our stupidity and unsparingly censure ourselves for not selecting one of the others. As we proceed, however, we find consolation in the fact that we are not alone; for the road, as far as the eye can see, is literally filled with fellow-travellers; and they like us, are fighting with each other for a place in the middle of the road. The strong toss the weak thoughtlessly aside and, indifferent to their fate, march straight on. This condition of affairs we view with grave concern and, consequently, strive the harder to retain our place in the road. We also see the weak, as we continue our journey, trying to edge their way through the throng and, with hands raised hesitatingly toward the branches of the trees in their quest for nourishment, seek to pluck the fruit therefrom. Their efforts are futile, for they are either rudely jostled, roughly pushed back or, unthinkingly, thrown down. Nevertheless, they are surprisingly courageous and again and again get to their feet and, despite their waning strength, try to regain a foothold in the road of life. All to no purpose, and one by one they stagger over to the wayside and, bending, find their sustenance in the blemished fruit lying upon the ground. This is a situation, indeed, that fills us with alarm, and we begin

to dread the ending of the road. To prevent such a like condition befalling us, we cram, as we go along, every available place in our clothing with fruit picked from the branches.

"But, after all, to what little use! We have not journeyed very far from this point, before the foolishness of our wisdom is made plain to us. The fruit we deemed so wise to gather for the satisfying of a later day, we find, upon examination as that day approaches, has all decayed and is fit only to be thrown out. 'To what profit have we lived?' bitterly ask we, as it drops from our trembling hands. Woefully discouraged, our gaze becomes fearful as we regard the road ahead. 'What will be the ending?' we wearily question as we look for a place to rest; but the seats, dotted here and there along the roadside, already are occupied with weary travellers. There is nothing for us to do but to continue on; and so we proceed—but more slowly now—sadly confident that we shall find at the end of the road, not the success which we believed would await us, but the doleful, grim form of failure."

Hannah sighed when the doctor had finished speaking, and said:

"That is a sad road you have pictured, doctor."

"Many do not regard it as such. Those who can keep in the middle of the road believe it to be all right."

"But what about the others?"

"Ah! for them it is all wrong."

"Well," said Hannah, with a mournful shake of her head, "it is one upon which I hope my Roland's feet shall never tread."

"Give him to me," said Doctor Ross earnestly, "and he shall know no other road than the one that leads to Good."

"Give him to you!" exclaimed Hannah incredulously. "You don't know what you ask."

"Do you think he will belong any the less to you?" asked the doctor, a beautiful smile lighting up his grave face.

"I don't know what you mean! Why, I wouldn't give him to anybody!" exclaimed Hannah, greatly excited.

"I don't mean to take him from you," said he gently. "And I can assure you he will be doubly yours if you give him to me."

"Oh, now I understand, you mean some sort of guardianship," said Hannah, her face brightening. "That would be splendid for him, and I cannot thank you sufficiently for contemplating such a thing. Indeed," her face aglow, "there is no one whom I should so wish to direct the life of my boy than yourself, Doctor Ross."

"Then it is agreed," said he, smiling and extending his hand. "Thank you."

"It is," replied Hannah, laying her hand in his. "But what about the fruits of the many other roads?"

"It would take too long to speak of them all," said the doctor, gently releasing her hand. "There is one other, however, whose entrance humanity considers most inviting. Trees, laden with luscious-appearing fruit, line the roadside for some distance in, and flowers of every hue entwine themselves among their branches. This roadway has many twists and turns and is open only to the few, which is regarded as a lamentable fact by the multitude standing at the entrance, gazing longingly in. Within this road, they believe, lies power. Here it is possible for man to command and be obeyed; be a master and not a slave. 'Ah!' say they, 'if one could only be a traveller upon this road, with what pleasure life might be lived. Such a thing as poverty, with its attributes of hunger and nakedness, does not exist here. Happiness, that fleeting thing, if to be found anywhere, must surely be found here. Why then,' impatiently they ask, 'should they be barred, by the simple circumstance of birth or something else quite as unfortunate, from this altogether lovely and wholly desirable roadway? Why are they bound by their necessities while the travellers of this road are lavish with luxuries?' And so they go on, questioning

unwisely and unprofitably, yearning for the lesser when they might have the greater. Why long to be a master when one might be a brother? Why pine for the dignity of being served, when the greater dignity is in the serving? Why wish for the possession of material riches, when the evident needs of another make us poor, indeed? Surely, of all things most foolish, is to seek to flee a poverty which is rich for a wealth that is poor. To seek to pick from the branches of the trees the seemingly luscious fruit, which at heart is dead, is to exchange happiness for misery; and to gather the beautifully colored flowers, from which exude poisonous vapors, is to pass from hope to despair. Not to permit oneself a free and wholesome intercourse with the human family, participating neither in its joys nor in its sorrows, is to make of oneself an outcast. Better, by far, take one of the many roads of the multitude than the select road of the few."

"And that is a road I would not select for my Ronald," said Hannah, her eyes swimming in tears. "Now tell me something about the road that leads to Good."

"It will not be very much, that is certain," said the doctor, throwing back his head, "for who could tell with any degree of accuracy the wonders of that beautiful road!"

"Tell me, anyway," pleaded Hannah.

"I will," acquiesced the doctor, and he began:

"The entrance to the road to Good, which is never closed but always remains open, is not particularly attractive excepting to the wise," said he. "At either side stand large and storm-defying trees, and upon their branches grow the fruit of no-compromise. Between the trees, holding up their heads in all their snowy loveliness, are the pure-white lilies of a new life. It is not by any means a wide thoroughfare; in fact, it is rather a narrow road. To its gate many come and look thoughtfully and questioningly in. Some regard the fruit growing upon the trees with a doubtful eye, thinking its verdant green betokens an undesirable freshness, and hesitate to avail themselves of the privilege of tasting and trying. The flowers within the gateway lack color, and appear not nearly so lovely to them as those they have seen growing in other roadways. So, shaking their heads doubtfully, they pass on. Others, more venturesome, decide they will taste the fruit, so standing without they stretch forth an arm and pick some off. They bite into it, and conclude the flavor is not altogether unpleasing, and they are inclined to enter; but a glance at the flowers brings a change of mind, for they have no desire to change the old life for the new. So they, too, pass on.

"Then one, wiser than the rest, stops and looks in.

In his face one can read a purpose, and the cry of genuine satisfaction that escapes from his lips as he perceives the stalwart trees, with their fruit-laden branches, and the pure, white lilies growing between, states emphatically that his purpose is to enter here. There is no doubt that this is the road for which he has been seeking; the desired destination has been reached. With haste he discards his travel-stained and much-worn garments, and with real affection greets the trees and kisses with gentle reverence the lilies at the gate, who, at his touch, move with a graceful, sweeping motion to one side and permit him to enter. They then resume their former position and he, arrayed in new raiment, surveys the road. He notes—perhaps wonderingly—that here the travellers do not strive for a good piece of the roadway; each has his allotted space in which to walk and wishes no more, their time, evidently, being fully occupied with the keeping of that in order. Greatly interested, he watches them as with stately tread and even step they move along, clearing as they go the way before them, for no destroying object is permitted to grow here.

"With confidence he takes his place in the road and begins the journey. He marvels, as he proceeds, at the continued fresh greenness of the fruit growing upon the branches of the trees; and it is not long before he discovers that its all-sustaining qualities are born

of the seed of Truth and that all alike may partake of it. With the head-gardeners, Love and Execution, he is fast becoming acquainted, imbibing the knowledge they impart with great avidity; for to this knowledge, he learns, can be imputed the good understanding existing among his fellow-travellers, producing their mutual respect for each other. Here, he realizes, if anywhere, the human family becomes the divine family, the old is exchanged for the new and the bad for the good.

"As he is nearing the end, he turns and looks back and, standing in the golden-hued autumn of life, concludes that the road to Good was a beautiful one; the knowledge it imparted spoke of the infinite, that mankind, as the Godhead, is one, and the understanding of that oneness makes the fruit of the road to Good immortal."

"And my little Ronald is to be a traveller upon that road!" exclaimed Hannah, her hands tightly clasped in her lap and her face reflecting, in a great measure, the wonderful light which illumined the doctor's face as he finished speaking. "I am so glad, so glad! No other road would I willingly have chosen for him."

The doctor smiled quizzically down into her eyes which still remained fascinatingly fixed upon his face.

"You are a wise mother," he said. "And we will speak of this again. But now I must attend to my mail."

"Can I help you?"

"Yes," replied he, rising to his feet and turning to leave the room. "I shall be glad if you will do so," and, walking quickly over to his desk, he pulled out the chair which stood in front of it and sat down.

Hannah immediately rose from her seat and followed him.

"While I am reading this one," said he, tearing open an envelope and removing its contents, "you may open the rest of these, and with a gentle movement of his disengaged hand the doctor pushed a neat pile of letters to one side of his desk.

"Very well," and Hannah drew a chair to that side of the desk and sat down.

In less than half-an-hour the letters were opened and read and marked for reply, and Hannah was walking back to her office carrying them in her hand.

As she disappeared through the door-way, the doctor arose from his chair and walked to the window. A glance informed him that his automobile, with John's motionless figure in the front seat, stood at the curb. He tapped lightly upon the window-pane, and un-

hesitatingly John's head turned in the direction of the sound. A nod and smile of recognition accompanied with a look which fell not short of being brotherly passed between the two men. Doctor Ross then left the window and began to prepare for his round of morning calls, and his servant turned his head away and looked straight ahead.

CHAPTER XV

FRANK ENTERS THE HOSPITAL OF THE NEW BIRTH

THE office-door opened, and Doctor Ross raised his eyes enquiringly.

"Oh, it's you, Frank," he said, with a smile, as he rose to his feet.

"Yes," said Frank, stepping in and closing the door behind him.

"Glad to see you, old fellow," said the doctor, extending his hand as he crossed the room to meet him. "How are you?" and he shook the hand Frank placed in his warmly. "Take a seat, and just as soon as I have finished reading this," holding up the paper in his left hand, "I'll be right with you."

Frank smiled and nodded in response, but instead of sitting down he walked over to the window and looked out.

The doctor went back to his seat and resumed the reading of the paper. It was soon read and, after placing it in the inside pocket of his coat, he got up and walked over to the window where Frank stood and laid a hand upon each of his shoulders.

At their touch, Frank immediately turned around.

"Well, doctor," said he, with a wan smile, "I've come over to give up my job."

"What for?" calmly asked the doctor. "Sit down and let us talk it over."

"There isn't any use, as far as I can see," said Frank, wearily sinking down into the nearest chair.

"Perhaps you can't see very well," said the doctor, seating himself on a chair opposite.

"Perhaps not," replied Frank, with a mournful shake of his head. "But, for that matter, I have learned I am not the only one so afflicted."

"What made you conclude to give up your work? Not the inability to secure patients, surely?"

"No, I can't say it was that exactly," said Frank hesitatingly. "The truth is," he blurted out, "I am too sick, myself, to seek any further," and his head sank into his hands.

"My poor Frank," said the doctor, and the notes of the paternal and maternal blended in his voice.

From Frank's lips came a dismal moan.

"If I were the only one so affected, I believe I could stand it," said he, raising his head; "but my quest for patients has opened my eyes to the fact that the whole world is infected with this same terrible sickness, and the worst of it all is it seems to be oblivious of the fact."

"Your work, then, has not been without its compensation; you have learned something."

"I can't say, though, that I altogether value the knowledge," replied Frank, with a sickly smile.

"No? Why?"

"Because the compensation derived from a painful knowledge is never pleasant."

"Not if it be true?"

"I can't see that the falsity or truth of a condition makes the result any the less terrible."

"The trouble with you, Frank," said the doctor, smiling gravely, "is that the truth terrifies you. Never before have you beheld her in all of her nakedness, and her no-compromising presence fills you with alarm. In your pursuit of patients, she has permitted you to look through her clear lenses, and you are appalled to find the same sickness within yourself that you expected to find in others. Also, you know conditions to be what they are and not what they seem, and they frighten you. And that is not surprising. However, there is a fear that is productive of health and a complacency that breeds disease. Now tell me just how you feel."

"How I feel," said Frank languidly; "words would fail to tell you how I feel. I am sick," shaking his head forlornly. "I am woefully and awfully sick, that is all I can tell you."

"But how does the sickness affect you?" persisted the doctor. "Surely, you can describe some of the symptoms."

"It affects me all over," replied Frank weakly. "I am like an old machine with all of its parts astray, and being so badly scattered about among the rubbish they are not to be found, even though I had the inclination to look for them, which I have not."

"By that, you mean to say, I suppose, you have lost all interest in life?"

"I fail to see anything in it for me."

"I am glad to hear you say that."

"You are," replied Frank, momentarily interested and then leaning wearily back in his chair. "Isn't that a rather strange statement for a physician to make?"

"Is it?" returned the doctor, with a low musical laugh. "Then, perhaps, it would be well for me to explain the meaning of it."

"Very well," indifferently replied Frank.

"To meet the needs of the human body with which man is endowed," said the doctor, "that body is provided with a human appetite, the individual satisfying of which means the continuation of the representation of existing humanity; that is, each member as it enters the human family and continues therein is required to eat the nourishment needed for the sustenance of his or her individual human-body, no other member being

able to perform that office. To illustrate,—No mother, no matter how great may be the love she bears for her child, can eat or drink for him the substance required for the growth of his human-body. If he is to grow, he must swallow the food that is put into his mouth. Nor can she take for him the exercise needed for his physical development. He must stretch out the baby-arms, squirm, kick and creep to strengthen the tiny baby-body, if, later on, he is to become a walking, perpendicular human-self. So it is with the unfolding of that infantile mentality; he must do his own thinking. The controlling force of that body is ever individualistic and gives its rights to no other.

"As it is with the human-dress of the child," he continued, "so it is with the child expressed in the dress. He, too, is endowed with an appetite, and his representation depends upon the nourishment he receives. To grow, he must eat, and to eat he must be fed; to expand, he must exercise, and time and willingness must be given to that exercise. The unfolding of that wonderful understanding, means a life lived with its greater understanding, if the life is to be active and fulfill its purpose. To neglect these things, deeming them of non-importance, is to cause his impoverishment, causing a blindness, which, in turn, produces an indifference to growth and an unwillingness to know or understand."

"Well," said Frank, making a feeble attempt to appear interested, "what has all this got to do with me?"

"Everything, for it is the cause of your sickness."

"The cause of my sickness?" queried Frank, bewildered. "Explain further, I don't quite understand."

"No; and it is going to be difficult to make you understand," replied the doctor, sadly. "You are suffering from soul paralysis, caused by the continued inaction of the life-controlling force."

"What in thunder are you talking about, doctor?" asked Frank, becoming irritated. "No man living ever lived any cleaner life than I have. What do you mean to insinuate?"

"I am not finding fault with the way in which you take care of 'your coat of skin,'* Frank," said the doctor, soothingly, "for you have taken excellent care of it; the trouble is, it has outgrown you. It has become your master and you its slave. At its 'come,' you follow; at its command of 'no further,' you stand still. So varied and multitudinous have been its demands that all of your time has been taken up in endeavoring to meet them; so busy have you been you have hardly been aware that you had an appetite; so intently have you listened to its voice you have nearly lost the use of your own. In striving to find a suitable place for its well-being and growth, you have disregarded those higher things necessary for your own

*Gen. iii, 21.

growth and well-being. The result is, you are sick and need treatment."

"Well, what do you prescribe?" asked Frank.

"That you enter the Hospital of The New Birth for treatment.

"You think, then, there is hope?"

"Undoubtedly."

"When do you advise me to apply for admittance?"

"Now, this afternoon. You may come with me and I will see you are admitted."

"What time are you going over?"

"I am due there at two o'clock, but as there is nothing here to keep me, John might as well take us right over," and the doctor rose and put on his hat and coat.

"What do they charge a day in the ward?" asked Frank as they were going out.

"Don't let that concern you," said the doctor, putting his arm in a friendly way through Frank's arm as they went down the steps. "I am responsible for any expense you may incur there. You are still in my employ, you know."

"It's very good of you doctor," murmured Frank, preceding the doctor into the automobile.

The doctor's response was a heavy sigh as he sat down beside him.

"What's the meaning of the sigh, doctor?" asked

Frank as the automobile began to make its way down the street.

The doctor smiled.

"In your present condition, you wouldn't understand if I should tell you," he said.

"I might try."

"Well, then, it is your inability to recognize me."

"Oh, is that all," replied Frank, laying his hand affectionately upon the doctor's shoulder. "Don't let that worry you; for, I can tell you, I consider you the best fellow I ever knew."

"Thank you," replied the doctor gravely.

"What kind of a hospital is the Hospital of The New Birth?" asked Frank. "Is it a private or a public institution?"

"It is both; yet not in the sense that you understand the words to imply," replied the doctor smiling. "That is, there are no private rooms to be obtained for any consideration. All the rooms are alike and are used as needed and, therefore, wards are not necessary. In this hospital, no undergraduate nurses are employed; they must all be graduates and are required to accord to all patients the same attention. The treatment is private, no one but the Great Physician and the patient being present. Admission, too, must be sought privately, the requirements being the desire and willingness of the patient to be made anew."

"That sounds good," replied Frank, thoughtfully. "It would just be my luck, though, to get over there and then be told that for every room there was an occupant and, therefore, there was no room for me."

"Have no fear of that, Frank," assured the doctor. "There is never any lack of room in that hospital. Its doors are always open, and a welcome awaits all they who seek to enter."

"There's no overcrowding, then," said Frank, with a sigh of relief; "that's a blessing. What school is responsible for its founding and continuance?"

"The School of the New Born. You will be eligible for membership after you have taken the course of treatment prescribed by the Doctor at the Hospital."

"What is the treatment?" asked Frank, betraying a slight uneasiness.

"If you would appreciate the result," replied the doctor, smiling enigmatically, "you must experience the treatment."

"To be well, it seems to me," exclaimed Frank, "I would submit to any treatment."

"That's the way to talk," returned the doctor. "Here we are," and the automobile turned into a road that led up to a large, pure-white stone building. When it reached the foot of the steps leading to the entrance it stopped, and the doctor alighted.

"This is the place," said he, "come on, Frank."

"All right," slowly replied Frank, his mind not entirely free from doubt as he rose a trifle reluctantly from his seat and followed the doctor up the short flight of steps. When they reached the top and stood upon the threshold, Frank paused and turned and for the moment hesitated. As he did so, he was surprised to see the form of a man, decrepit and old, whose face strangely resembled his own, standing beside him. Pitifully pleading were the eyes in the aged face upraised to his in their voiceless entreaty that he should go no further; eager were the shaking, outstretched arms in their wordless beseeching that he should not utterly and entirely forsake and abandon their owner. Frank's heart sank within him as he stood there sadly contemplating the feeble, trembling figure, and he questioned seriously whether he should, or should not, leave this old man to the loneliness and infirmities of old age. But the gentle pressure of the doctor's hand upon his arm decided the question for him, and he knew that he must; there was no other way. So, with a last long look into the dim eyes of the grief-rent, wrinkled face and with a gesture of utter helplessness, Frank bade it a mute farewell and passed with the doctor through the open-door, perceiving not, as he went, that the aged face and form of the self he left behind was being gently consumed by the golden light that shone from the portals within.

Farther we cannot go. Would we, if we could? Would we know the meaning of absolute newness, the abandoning of the oldness of the old for the newness of the new, the putting of new wine in new bottles; the replacing of old institutions with the new; not the intermingling of old with new, not the putting of new wine in old bottles, "nor the mending of old garments with the new"? If we would, then with a little thinking we may. To have a new order, a new society, we must have a new creature, and not one but all must experience the treatment of the Hospital of The New Birth.

CHAPTER XVI

DOCTOR ROSS KEEPS HIS APPOINTMENT WITH DOROTHY

"I THINK that's Doctor Ross, Bertha," said Dorothy as the bell rang. "If it is, tell him to step into my room and I'll be in in a very few minutes."

"Very well, ma'am," said Bertha, and she stepped out to open the door.

"Good-morning, Bertha," said Doctor Ross, for, as Dorothy had predicted, it was he. "Is Miss Richardson in?"

"Yis, sah," replied Bertha, with a broad smile. "She's 'spectin' yo', sah, an' told me to ax yo' to step into her room an' she would be right in."

"Thank you," and his tall form, with its stooped shoulders, passed on up the hall.

"It's the doctor, ma'am," announced Bertha when she returned to the kitchen.

"I thought so," said Dorothy, not troubling to turn her head and keeping right on with what she was doing, counting and sorting soiled clothes for the laundry. "Now," as she placed the last piece in the hamper with

the list on top, "this is all ready for anyone that comes."

"I'll attend to it, ma'am," said Bertha, and Dorothy, with a "thank you," walked out of the kitchen.

"It's awfully good of you to come over so early, Bob," were the words with which she greeted Doctor Ross as she sat down beside him upon the couch. "And I am very glad for I have so much to tell you."

"About your difficulties?" queried he, smiling.

"Yes; and to add to them I find that Mr. Thompson's bed was not slept in last night. The last time I saw him was a little before noon yesterday, and then he looked far from well. I am afraid something terrible has happened to him."

"Something has happened to him," said the doctor quietly, "he is sick and in the hospital. But there is no cause for alarm," added he assuringly, "for he will soon be well."

"Why did he go to a hospital?" asked Dorothy, much concerned. "I am sure he would have been just as well-off here. I hate to think of any inmate of the 'home-living place' being in a hospital."

"And yet it was the only thing for him to do."

"What makes you so sure of that, Bob?"

"Because he needed a treatment entirely different from any you could give him, Dorothy," replied the

doctor, laying his hand gently over one of hers lying in her lap.

"I would have done my best," said Dorothy, permitting her hand to rest quietly under his. "Surely, you cannot ask any more."

"No; nor do I ask that of you, Dorothy. Thompson's sickness is one which your best could never cure."

"But yours and mine might," suggested Dorothy gravely.

"United, yes; but separate and apart, never."

Dorothy sighed and leaned back wearily against the back of the couch.

"Do you know, Bob," said she, "sometimes I wish we were united."

"And at other times you are glad we are not, I suppose."

"Yes; when I am confronted with conditions into which you would not fit at all, I am glad. Conditions, regrettable perhaps, and yet, nevertheless, impossible to do without."

"Poor Dorothy," said the doctor sighing, "don't you know that any condition which is deemed regrettable should be done without?"

"And if it is, another as bad will spring up."

"Then that, too, should be done without."

Dorothy did not reply and the doctor continued:

'All that 'offends or makes weak' should be uprooted and cast out. The attitude that tolerates one evil for fear a worse may come is a dangerous one, for in its pitiful ignorance it fosters the parent of many succeeding evils."

"That's all very well," replied Dorothy impatiently. "But who is able to do this? I am not."

"I am."

"You, Bob! then why don't you do it?"

"Because my time has not come. When it does, no evil can behold my face and live."

"How long must we wait?"

"Until the human family awakens to the realization of its great need of me. But now tell me something of your difficulties," said he, patting her hand encouragingly.

"It's too bad to bother you with my troubles, Bob," replied Dorothy, raising a pair of tired eyes hesitatingly to his face.

"I understand, Dorothy," said the doctor sympathetically. "I know you would not do so if there were any possible way of overcoming them without my assistance."

"That's just it, Bob," replied Dorothy with a weary sigh. "But my difficulties have grown until they are positively alarming. They are becoming more numerous every day, and I really don't know where they

begin and am afraid to think where they may end. Sometimes I question the advisability of going on, and then, again, I am doubtful of the consequence if I should go back."

"Poor Dorothy, but what do you think is your greatest difficulty?"

"I don't know, Bob, but I think it is the dissatisfaction that stalks with me at every step," replied Dorothy. "No one is satisfied; all think they are deserving of more than they receive, and not any but long for more and more of this world's goods."

"I see, their lives are one continual wish."

"Yes, and try as I may, I am unable to meet all of their demands."

"And you wonder why, I suppose?"

"Yes, I do."

"And you would like me to tell you, is that it?"

"Yes, if you can."

"Because you can only fill part of the requirements of a condition, is one of the reasons, Dorothy. Someone else is needed to fill the other part. Without this someone's aid, the work is only partly done and produces an incomplete Service."

"I must confess, Bob," said Dorothy sadly, "my work, in many respects, is woefully disappointing."

"It is bound to be so, Dorothy," said the doctor, rising from the couch and beginning to walk leisurely

up and down the room, "when you prohibit someone, whose right it is, to do his part of the work."

"Then to do away with all of this dissatisfaction," queried she, "I must marry you."

"Yes, Dorothy; it is the only way."

Dorothy did not reply immediately but sat thoughtfully silent for several minutes, then she said:

"I wish I could feel as sure in my mind as you do, Bob, that the only thing needed to perfect my service is this union with you. But, candidly, I must say, I have grave doubts."

"They will all disappear after we are married," said the doctor, and he stopped in his walk and smiled confidently down upon her. "And the wonder of it all will be that you ever had any."

"I wish I could believe so," said Dorothy, with a doubtful shake of her head.

"I know so," emphatically said the doctor.

"What, then, will become of my 'home-living place'?"

"You never succeeded in establishing such a place, Dorothy," replied the doctor, sitting down beside her. "You hoped to do so, but in reality all you have been able to do is to build a more or less charitable institution and, under present conditions, it can never be aught else, for, to establish a 'home-living place' without me is an impossibility."

"Why an impossibility?" imperatively demanded Dorothy.

"Because we are so constituted we cannot perform any perfect work independently; we are absolutely necessary to each other and——"

"It is utterly impossible to render a service complete without you," interrupted Dorothy sharply.

"That is true," said the doctor quietly. "Why, then, do you hesitate, Dorothy? Don't you want to render a service perfect and complete?"

"Indeed I do, Bob," she replied, very earnestly. "But," throwing out her hands helplessly, "how can I?"

"By permitting me to pull half of the load."

"Yes, but I should have to abandon my road for yours," complained she.

"You would."

"However," thoughtfully said she, "I don't believe I should object to that, if I were sure as much could be accomplished along that way."

"Ah, Dorothy," exclaimed the doctor, "how pitifully ignorant you are of my road! After you have travelled it," laying his hand affectionately upon her shoulder, "you'll ne'er forsake it for another. Results unheard of and undreamed of by you are achieved there; life in all its richness and beauty is lived there, and is deemed by all an enjoyable and an ever enduring

fact. Humanity, with all of its unpurchasable rights, is found there, and human waste is unknown. Believe me, my dear, if I did not know it to be in every way superior to the one you are travelling, I would not ask you to make the change."

"How is it, Bob," asked Dorothy, wrinkling her forehead into a puzzled frown, "that you are so cognizant of all the defects of my road while I am unable to appreciate the advantages of yours?"

"It is because you have so persistently looked in the one direction. For that reason you are unable to see or appreciate any other and, naturally, conclude there is no other."

"And what will render the seeing of the other possible?"

"Our marriage."

"Is there no other way?"

"There is no other way, Dorothy."

Then, resignedly, "I suppose I shall have to submit."

"But there is a condition."

"What is it?"

"You must grant me implicit obedience."

"Well, that is something to consider," said Dorothy, thoughtfully raising her eyes to his face.

"This obedience will not be grievous, I assure you,

Dorothy, and in the course of time will be to you a crown of enduring glory."

"What will be the outcome if I continue my present course?"

"Disquietude, unrest, unhappiness—and then utter destruction."

"And that is my destiny if I persist in taking my own road?" queried Dorothy, her head bent and her eyes fixed intently upon the rug at her feet.

"It is."

"And what after that?"

"Out of the chaos will come a greater wisdom than yours, Dorothy—a wisdom born from the knowledge gained from the many years spent in the school of Service. She will not scorn nor question the taking of my road, for she will recognize it as being the only way, knowing that all other roadways can lead but to one place—the city of desolation and despair. But, surely, this need not be, for I love you, Dorothy. The love with which I would surround you, I know is far beyond your ken or understanding. It is great in its depth, wonderful in its power and unmeasurable in its contents. All that is necessary to make all things possible unto you, is to accept it. Why, then, do you hesitate?"

"I wouldn't, Bob," wailed she, "if I could only be-

lieve it, but I cannot; and that, to me, is the most hopeless thing about it all."

"Your unbelief?"

"Yes."

"Have your difficulties taught you nothing, then?"

Dorothy did not reply, and the doctor continued:

"True belief is based upon a knowledge of facts; therefore, I do not ask you to believe but 'to taste and try.'"

"Yes, but this is a case of buying before 'tasting and trying,'" replied Dorothy, fretfully.

"Which makes you rather doubt the advisability of deserting a known condition, although it has proven entirely unsatisfying, for one unknown, even though it promises to prove, in every way, satisfying?"

"That's it, Bob, it promises to, but I am not sure that it will. Prove to me that it will, and I will marry you without further delay."

"I cannot, Dorothy," replied the doctor, sadly shaking his head. "The proof of it is dependent upon our union."

"Then, I suppose," said she, reluctantly, "I must consent to it," and, rising to her feet, she walked with faltering step over to the window and looked out.

"If you would be happy, you must," replied the doctor, standing up. "But, I can assure you, you will

never regret it," and he stepped quickly over to where she stood.

"Let us hope so," said she, looking up at him with a wan smile.

"What a doubtful Dorothy," said the doctor, smiling gravely down upon her. "Never mind, this life of hoping and doubting will soon be at an end for you," and he stooped over and tenderly kissed her quivering lips.

"I can't help it, Bob, I've lived so long in a sea of doubt. But, I want to tell you this, if I must marry, I am rather glad it is you, for I know Margaret will be pleased."

"I am afraid not," said the doctor, gently placing his arms around her.

"Because you persist in retaining Hannah Thompson in your employ?"

"Yes."

"Well, I can't see how that can be remedied. I consider Margaret's attitude in that particular instance decidedly unreasonable and unfair."

"Yes, indeed," agreed the doctor. "However, Dorothy, when you are my wife, you will understand and appreciate very much better than you do now why it is impossible for anything like fairness to exist within her."

"Oh, I don't know, Bob," said she, "I can hardly believe she is as bad as all that."

"No? Well, perhaps, after you have imparted your news to her, her attitude toward you may cause you to alter your opinion."

"Why, I don't understand you, Bob!" exclaimed Dorothy, surprisedly, "for our marriage is the very thing she has been trying so long to bring about."

"Ah! but that was before she decided to cast me out," said the doctor, smiling enigmatically.

"I see, and if I marry you she will cast me out?"

"Yes; but don't permit that to cause you any anxiety, for it will end, unfortunately for her, in the obliteration of herself."

"Poor Margaret," said Dorothy, sorrowfully, "I am not willing to believe that such an unhappy fate awaits her."

"But it does," said the doctor decisively, "and, likewise, to all they who cast me out."

"Anyway," said Dorothy, sadly, "I shall go over and bid her goodby tomorrow morning."

"Yes, I should do that," advised the doctor. "But now I must be off. Can you be ready by four o'clock tomorrow afternoon, Dorothy?"

"You mean to be married then?"

"Yes."

"I suppose if it has to be, it might as well be then as any other time. Yes, I'll be ready."

"All right, I'll be here about fifteen minutes before four," said the doctor, and he picked up his coat from the back of a chair and thrust his hands into its sleeves. "It is useless, now, to tell you how happy I shall make you," said he, as he took his hat from the table, "but you will see," and bending over he touched Dorothy's forehead lightly with his lips.

"It will not be because you do not try, I know that," said she, as she turned and followed him to the door.

"I shall not only try, but I shall succeed," said he, opening the door and stepping into the hall. "Gooby, Dorothy."

"Goodby, Bob," said she, and he hurried through the hall and down the stairs, and Dorothy, suddenly feeling weak and old, closed the door and went back to her room to think.

CHAPTER XVII

DOROTHY BIDS DOCTOR AND MRS. GORDON FAREWELL

THE next morning, in the middle of the forenoon, found Dorothy ascending the brown-stone steps leading to the handsome dwelling belonging to Doctor and Mrs. Gordon. In response to her ring of the bell, the door was opened by a neatly attired maid.

"Good-morning, Sarah," said Dorothy, "is Mrs. Gordon in?"

"She is, ma'am," replied Sarah, her pleasant face lighting up with a smile as she stepped to one side of the doorway to permit Dorothy to enter. Then closing the door, she led the way to a room on one side of the hall, where, at a desk, sat Mrs. Gordon busily engaged in answering the morning's mail.

"Miss Richardson, ma'am," announced Sarah.

"Well, of all things, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, quickly raising her head, "what brings you over this morning?" Then she called after the maid, whose receding steps could be heard in the hall, "Sarah, Miss Richardson will be here for luncheon."

"Very well, ma'am," answered back Sarah.

"Sit over there, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, motioning with her hand to a rocking-chair a short distance from where she sat, "and I'll soon be through. I'll just finish this letter," tapping with her finger a sheet of paper lying in front of her; "the others can wait."

"Yes, don't let me disturb you," said Dorothy, sitting down. "I can wait till you are through" and she proceeded to remove her hat and coat, laying them on a chair close by.

"You don't appear to be in as good spirits as usual, Dorothy," remarked Mrs. Gordon as she resumed her writing.

"No?" replied Dorothy, leaning back in her chair and gazing meditatively at the wall.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Gordon, after a silence of three or four minutes, "this is finished and I am through for the present," and laying down her pen she blotted the newly written letter. "The others I'll attend to this afternoon," added she, smiling over at Dorothy as she folded up the letter and inserted it in its addressed envelope and tossed it to the rear of her desk, where it lay quivering among several others.

"It's nothing serious, is it, Dorothy, that has brought you over?" asked she, rising from her chair and walking leisurely over to where Dorothy sat.

"That all depends upon what you would consider serious, Margaret," replied Dorothy, lifting her face

to receive Mrs. Gordon's kiss. "Bob does not think so, but you may. He and I are to be married this afternoon at four o'clock."

"What!" almost screamed Mrs. Gordon incredulously, stepping back and her face darkening. "That is not possible?"

"But it is, Margaret, quite possible," replied Dorothy, smiling feebly. "Sit down, and I will tell you all about it. But, first, tell me why it is impossible? Is not this the very thing you have been urging me to do?"

"It is," said Mrs. Gordon, frowning perplexedly, "but that was before the Hannah Thompson affair," and she stooped down and removed Dorothy's hat and coat from the chair to the foot of the couch. "Since then, I have considered such a union totally out of the question," and, pulling the chair forward a little, she sat down. "What induced you to consent to it? Your work, I understood, prohibited all thought of such a thing."

"Until very recently I believed so, too, Margaret; but now I am reluctantly compelled to conclude that perhaps its well-being and continuance is solely dependent upon it."

"What caused you to arrive at such a conclusion?"

"My many difficulties," answered Dorothy wearily. "Instead of diminishing, as I believed they would, they

have steadily increased. Indeed," helplessly, "they have grown to such proportions, they are, at the present time, beyond my control."

"And you are foolish enough to believe that this union will enable you to control them," said Mrs. Gordon, surprisedly.

"I cannot say positively it will, I can only hope so."

"Something more substantial than hope is necessary, Dorothy, for the happy consummation of such a marriage."

"Perhaps so," replied Dorothy dolefully; "yet it is better to begin with that than nothing."

"Why begin at all?" asked Mrs. Gordon with a grim smile.

"Because there does not appear to be any other way."

"In other words, it is your last chance."

"You may put it that way, if you like," replied Dorothy, smiling weakly, "but that is just it."

"Even so," said Mrs. Gordon, impatiently, "I can't see that that is any reason for your marrying. You are not the only one who has lived to see the end of their day without the aid of matrimony."

"But that's just it," said Dorothy, aroused from her apathy, "I don't want to see the end of my day. I am entering into matrimony for the preservation of it."

"For the preservation of it," repeated Mrs. Gordon, puzzled. "Do you expect to live always?"

"I do not know that I expect to," replied Dorothy slowly; "but I do know there is nothing I so much desire as to live always."

"And this contemplated union, you believe, makes that possible?"

"It offers the prospect and, just now, I ask no more."

"It will prove too great an assimilation, I am afraid you will find, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, dubiously shaking her head, "and you will have little voice in the many things which govern your life. For your own good, I strongly advise you to reconsider your decision."

"I have, Margaret. I have considered and reconsidered until I am heart-sick and weary, but I can see no other way. A voice, which will not be stilled, keeps saying in answer to my many questions: 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'"

"Nonsense," crossly replied Mrs. Gordon. "You are simply weak, that is all, and cannot withstand the greater influence."

"Don't be cross, Margaret," pleaded Dorothy. "I am sure you would not if you understood the situation better."

"Perhaps not, but it doesn't make me feel any too

good-natured to know I am going to lose you," replied Mrs. Gordon irritably.

"Surely, that is not necessary."

"You forget at four o'clock this afternoon you and Bob are to become one," reminded Mrs. Gordon.

"What difference does that make?" asked Dorothy, her eyes opening wide.

"All the difference in the world," replied Mrs. Gordon, sadly. "After that, your foes will be his and his yours. It no longer will be I, but we; not mine, but ours."

"What of that? Surely a reconciliation between you and Bob is not impossible. Why not let this union be the means of bringing it about?"

"I wish it might, but there is only one condition which could make that possible."

"The discharging of Hannah Thompson?"

"Yes."

"But, Margaret, think how cruel and unfair that would be. Bob would not be true to himself if he could do such a thing."

"Perhaps not, but he would be true to me."

"And false to himself," replied Dorothy with a faint smile. "I can't imagine Bob ever being that."

"Which will make him very uncomfortable to live with, I am of the opinion, Dorothy."

"Poor Margaret," said Dorothy, bending forward

and laying her hand upon one of Mrs. Gordon's, "you do not understand."

"Don't I? Well, we'll see. Anyway, I advise you to keep your sympathy for yourself; you will need it, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, with a smile which, Dorothy thought, made her handsome face for the moment positively ugly. "I will endeavor to live without either of you."

"Am I to conclude, then, that in the casting out of Bob, you also cast me out?" asked Dorothy, her lips trembling.

"You will soon be one, will you not, Dorothy?"

"Yes."

"That, then, answers your question," replied Mrs. Gordon, rising and pushing back her chair. "However, I should be glad, Dorothy, if you would stay and take luncheon with me; it will be, I am sorry to say, for the last time. Here is Douglas. He will, I know, be interested in your news."

"Well, well, Dorothy, how-do-you-do?" said Doctor Gordon, smiling, as he came into the room. "What fortunate circumstance is responsible for your presence here this morning?" and he crossed the room quickly and took the hand she extended. "Feeling pretty well?" asked he, as he released her hand.

"Nothing to boast of, Douglas," replied she, smilingly looking up at him as she leaned back in her chair.

"Sit down, Douglas," commanded Mrs. Gordon. "Dorothy has some interesting news for you."

"Have you, Dorothy?" inquired the doctor, seating himself in the chair Mrs. Gordon had just vacated. "Something good, I suppose?"

A faint color came into Dorothy's cheeks and spread over her face, and she began to feel decidedly uncomfortable under the scrutiny of the doctor's kindly blue eyes.

"Tell him, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, moving slowly toward the door, "and let him decide," her keen eyes noting with no little inward degree of satisfaction Dorothy's increasing discomfiture. "I'll have to ask you to excuse me, however," added she, "while I make a trip to the dining-room to see how far luncheon has progressed in its preparation."

"What is it, Dorothy?" asked the doctor as Mrs. Gordon stepped through the doorway and descended a long flight of stairs.

"Something of which I think you will approve," replied she. "Bob and I are to be married at four o'clock this afternoon."

"To be married at four o'clock this afternoon!" re-

peated Doctor Gordon, very much surprised. "Why, Dorothy, I thought your work prohibited you from even contemplating such a thing. How did this change of mind come about? Surely, you did not permit yourself to be over-persuaded?"

"No, I can't say that I did," replied she, regarding Doctor Gordon with a pair of very grave eyes. "To my mind it is the culmination of many disquieting facts."

"What do you mean by that, Dorothy?" asked the doctor, looking puzzled.

"This," replied Dorothy, her voice trembling: "to my sorrow and regret, I have failed to fulfill the purpose and boast of my life; that is, to establish a 'home-living place' for the children of men."

"How is that, Dorothy?" queried the doctor. "I understood you were making it more or less of a success."

"Your understanding is at fault, I am afraid, Douglas," said Dorothy, with a sad shake of her head, "for it is less of a success, by far, than I hoped it would be."

"Indeed! Well, well, I am sorry to hear that, Dorothy," replied the doctor sympathetically. "But don't you think you are a trifle pessimistic, probably owing to your poor state of health? What you need is a

tonic. Get your physician to prescribe one for you. I would gladly do so, as you know; but then, you have never been my patient."

"I understand, Douglas," said Dorothy, her face pathetic in its seriousness. "However, I don't believe I can attribute the state of affairs to my poor health; in fact, I am of the opinion that my ill-health is owing to the prevailing miserable conditions. And it is useless for me to ask my physician to prescribe a tonic, for he has done so, and the one he prescribes is himself."

"And what do you think about it, Dorothy?"

"I am trying not to think, Douglas, for what is the use when I have resolved to do, trusting that the remedy prescribed will eventually dissipate and obliterate all the elements now at war?"

"I see," said Doctor Gordon, laughing, and his blue eyes twinkling; "you have made up your mind to be a good patient and take your medicine, no matter how nasty the taste."

"I intend to be an obedient patient, Douglas," said Dorothy, trying to smile; "and I shall not mind the taste of the medicine if it only effects a cure."

"Which is problematical, of course," said Doctor Gordon. "But," hopefully, "it may be possible, after all."

"It promises to be, and I must content myself with that for the present," said Dorothy, sighing.

"Luncheon is ready, Dorothy and Douglas," called Mrs. Gordon from the foot of the stairs. "Come right down."

"We'll be right down, Margaret," they called back simultaneously, and rising, the doctor preceding, they went downstairs.

"You may sit in your old place, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon when they entered the dining-room. Then, as she sat down at one end of the table and the doctor took his place at the other, she turned to the maid and said:

"You may be excused for the present. Stay in the kitchen and I will ring if I need you."

"Very well, ma'am," replied Sarah.

"What do you think of Dorothy's news?" Mrs. Gordon asked her husband when the maid had gone and the door closed behind her.

"Under the circumstances, it is quite surprising."

"Is that all?" asked Mrs. Gordon, her eyes opening wide in amazement. "It is much more, I can assure you, than that to me."

"Rather a regrettable surprise, I suppose?" inquired the doctor, removing with a fork a lamb chop from

the platter, which he placed upon a plate and passed to Dorothy.

"Words are inadequate to express just how I feel about it," replied Mrs. Gordon sharply, as she arranged the cups and proceeded to pour out the tea.

"Oh," said the doctor soothingly, putting a chop upon another plate and passing it, with the assistance of Dorothy, to his wife, "it may not prove such a terrible thing for Dorothy, after all. You are far too prone, Margaret, to take the gray view of life. You should be more hopeful."

"Like you?" queried Mrs. Gordon sneeringly. "Sometimes, Douglas, do you know, I believe that optimistic view of life which you are so fond of taking and which you so readily recommend to your wife, your friends and patients, will, some day, be the death of you. Everything, no matter how serious it may appear, to your mind is all right, or, at any rate, will eventually be so, if people would only train their minds to believe it. It is, no doubt, very pleasant to mentally close the eyes to the unpleasantnesses of the real and existing, and open them to view the delightful phantasies of the unreal and non-existent. But it is not safe. It is not possible to glide through life in any such easy-going fashion without, sooner or later, meet-

ing the consequences. This marital arrangement of Dorothy's I consider positively disastrous to her, to you and to me."

"That sounds rather bad, doesn't it, Dorothy?" said Doctor Gordon, smiling over at her. "But the sound, I feel sure, will prove worse than the cause."

Dorothy forced a smile as she said:

"Should this union result unfortunately for me, I hope, with all my heart, its consequences may not touch either of you. I must admit I am not entering it as willingly as I wish I were; it is because I must,—I can see no other way. You, Margaret, I know, would have me continue my struggle with the ever-accumulating and insurmountable obstacles rather than risk a change which might prove, as you say, 'disastrous' in its results. Douglas, you are more hopeful,—and you must forgive me for saying what I am going to say,—but it is because you are less interested. Your dreaming faith satisfies you, and you are slow to be aroused. To you everything is all right when really it is all wrong. Delightful companion to many upon the road of life though you are, you are not a safe one to follow. The crier who cries out, 'All is well,' knowing not himself that all is ill, is not the one to heed. When I consented, at last, to Bob's earnest and persistent

pleading that I should marry him, I firmly believed that it would bring about a reconciliation between you, Margaret, and him; and you, Douglas, could enjoy again the companionship of your old friend. In this, I am pained to learn, I was mistaken. That I love you both, I think you know, and to break a friendship of so many, many years, I feel you cannot fail to appreciate, is costing me dear."

As Dorothy finished speaking, her voice broke and she felt in her bag for her handkerchief, and, pushing back her plate from which she had made a pretense at eating, she leaned back in her chair and wiped the tears from her streaming eyes.

"Don't cry, Dorothy," said the doctor; "everything, no doubt, will come out much better than we anticipate."

"Let her alone, Douglas," commanded Mrs. Gordon. "A good cry will do her good," and the doctor subsided.

In a few minutes Dorothy's sobs ceased, and she wiped the last trace of her tears away.

"I didn't mean to do this," she said, making a pitiful attempt to smile.

"Don't apologize, Dorothy; I feel very much the same way, myself," said Mrs. Gordon huskily. "How-

ever, what must be, must be, I suppose, and we must make up our minds to bear it."

"Is a reconciliation between you and Bob so impossible, then?" wistfully asked Dorothy.

"Under present conditions, Dorothy, I regret to say it is quite impossible," decidedly replied Mrs. Gordon.

"Why under the present conditions, Margaret?" asked her husband, mystified.

"Because a reconciliation under the present conditions would mean the ultimate doom of my supremacy; it would mean the acknowledgment of a greater force than mine and a willingness to submit to its domination," explained Mrs. Gordon.

"And this you cannot do because you recognize no such force?" queried her husband.

"That is just it, exactly," replied his wife, pushing her cup and saucer back and rising from the table.

"Bob, I am sure, would not insist upon that," said Dorothy, as she, too, rose from the table.

"Not in words, perhaps," said Mrs. Gordon, ringing the bell for the maid and then leading the way upstairs, "but in deeds, yes."

"I think you are mistaken, Margaret," said her husband from the rear. "Indeed, I am sure you are; for my experience with Bob has proven to me that he is

a mighty fine fellow. I don't claim to understand him, altogether, but——"

"No, nor no one else," tartly interrupted Mrs. Gordon. "There might be some living with him if one could."

"Come now, you are rather hard upon the poor fellow," said her husband, laughing.

"Not a bit more so than he is on me," said Mrs. Gordon as she reached the top step and led the way to the room where they had been previously sitting. "How many times has he intimated that it would be agreeable to him if I would mind my own business; that my interference was not desired, and he would be grateful to me if I would wait until it was solicited!"

"Poor Bob," mused Dorothy, taking up her hat and putting it on; "I am beginning to believe our failure to appreciate him is due to our lack of understanding."

"He will not be slow to improve yours, Dorothy, never fear," replied Mrs. Gordon sarcastically, as her husband picked up Dorothy's coat from the couch and held it open for her to put her arms into its sleeves. "You may rest assured he will see to it that you have every opportunity to duly appreciate him. I must say I do not envy you the experience."

"Come now, Margaret," interposed the doctor, shaking his head rebukingly at her, "the experience may

not prove so altogether unpleasant as you think. We'll hope not, anyway," added he encouragingly.

"Thank you, Douglas," said Dorothy, buttoning up her coat.

"I suppose you think I am very hard, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, placing a hand upon each of Dorothy's shoulders and looking down into her face with swimming eyes. "If I appear so, it is only because I feel I must; for in this union about to take place I recognize, in a way you and Douglas cannot, its awful significance. It is not easy, believe me, my dear, to bid goodby to an old friend and stand quietly by and watch her pass out of your life, knowing that her identity will soon be submerged into that of another, whose only desire and purpose is to make her unrecognizable even to herself. Conditions, I know, must indeed have been alarming to have made you contemplate such a step; but do you think it possible that a marriage brought about by the pressure of circumstances can result happily? Would it not be wiser to struggle and fight with known conditions than to permit them to force you into a life of which you know nothing, and into which you admit you are about to enter unwillingly? Is it wise to exchange a known present for a strange and untried future? You have some little time between now and four o'clock, and in that time I strongly advise you to stop and think well and

long before definitely deciding to take this terribly important and non-retreating step."

"It is useless to tell me to think, Margaret," said Dorothy, with a hoarse laugh, "for, if thinking alone were necessary, I should not be here now about to bid you goodby. I have thought and thought until my brain reels with thought, but without a satisfactory result. Now, come what may," emphatically, "I am going to act."

"Very well, Dorothy," replied Mrs. Gordon, removing her hands and stepping back a little; "I shall not attempt to dissuade you further."

"Then I shall bid you goodby, Margaret," said Dorothy, holding out her hand and lifting her face to be kissed; "and, in spite of what you have said, I shall look forward to a meeting and a greeting between us, some day."

"Goodby, Dorothy," said Mrs. Gordon, stooping down and kissing her; "you little guess how lonely I am going to be without you," and a tear dropped upon Dorothy's forehead.

"Goodby, Douglas," said Dorothy, turning to place her hand in the doctor's outstretched palm; "bright and happy friend that you are, I shall miss you sadly."

"I don't think you will, Dorothy," said Doctor Gordon, doubtfully. "Although I am regarded by many as being the greater physician, I know I am not. I am

but the shadow of the infinitely greater physician, and he it is with whom your life is to be united today. Goodby, Dorothy, it has been pleasant to know you, but you will soon cease to think or speak of me, for you will have found in your husband one greater than I."

And thus Dorothy bade farewell to Convention and to Optimism.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MARRIAGE

"I DON'T believe you were ever late in keeping an appointment, were you, Bob?" asked Dorothy as Doctor Ross helped her into the automobile and she sat down in a seat to the right of the open door.

"No; I have always taken particular care to keep my engagements promptly," replied the doctor, stepping in behind her, "and," sitting down and pulling the door shut, "it would indeed be surprising, would it not, if I failed to put in an appearance at the appointed time upon my wedding-day?"

Dorothy smiled and nodded in response.

"You may proceed, John," said Doctor Ross to the motionless figure sitting in front.

"Very well, sir," replied John, and the car began to make its way slowly up the street.

"Well, Dorothy," queried the doctor, taking possession of her small hands and holding them tightly, "does our prospective marriage still frighten you?"

"I can't say that it does; but to tell you the truth,

Bob, my condition is such that I have neither the power to dread nor fear anything. All my faculties are benumbed and I feel as though I were partly asleep."

"Poor little girl," tenderly said the doctor, releasing her hands and putting his arm gently around her and drawing her close to his side, "you have had a pretty hard time."

"Yes, indeed I have; and even you, Bob, I don't believe know how very hard it all has been."

"Don't you believe that, Dorothy, for, I assure you, I fully appreciated your position. But bid it goodby and leave it with the many other things of yesterday, for today you enter into a new kingdom, a kingdom incorruptible and without decay."

"I have often planned and dreamed of such a kingdom," replied Dorothy sadly, "but try as I would I was never able to realize it."

"You could not without me, dearest," replied Doctor Ross, pressing her to him.

"It seems not," replied Dorothy, making a feeble effort to withdraw from his embrace. "But tell me something of this kingdom into which I am about to enter."

"It is a kingdom, Dorothy," replied Doctor Ross, with one of his rare smiles which lit up his usually grave

face and made it for the moment astonishingly beautiful, "where, as in the world you are leaving, men reap what they sow;—the only difference being, however, that in the one to which we are travelling no tares are sown and, therefore, the reaping is a pleasant task; and, although his labors are many, the voice of man is never heard raised, pleading weariness, hunger, cold or nakedness, for here man finds his rest, his sustenance, his warmth and raiment in his work. Here man, without the thought of what evil his brother-man may do unto him, enters into the morning of life. Fearless he runs, undaunted by the fear of a possible failure coming to him on the morrow; for, for him, no such word exists. Failures do not grow here; man fulfills the purpose of his creation and succeeds. Here——"

"What a wonderful kingdom it must be!" interrupted Dorothy musingly. "I wish I were not so skeptical."

"Until you are torn up root and branch, you will continue to be so, Dorothy," replied the doctor, tenderly smiling down into her tired and care-worn face. "However, don't despair, for your tree is soon to be planted in a decidedly different soil, the elements of which are so sadly needed for its perfect growth."

Dorothy sighed, shook her head and sadly smiled.

"I trust it will not suffer from the transplanting," she said.

"Don't let that cause you any uneasiness, Dorothy; there is no fear of that. So beautiful will it become, you will be unable to recognize in it the gnarled and scarred trunk, with its stooped, over-burdened and yellow-leafed laden branches, of your old tree. Proudly erect will it stand, flaunting its stout branches defiantly to every wind that blows, be they ever so destructive-seeking in their tempestuousness. And how you will love this tree, Dorothy, for it will reflect your strength as the one now reflects your weakness. It will proclaim to all the world in the song of the leaves, as they sway back and forth upon their branches, man's conquest of self, as the one now proclaims him her devotee. Its growth will mean the perfection of man, rendering all his works acceptable and worthy of their creation."

"You are foretelling a strange future, Bob," said Dorothy, gazing dreamily ahead, "and one so amazingly different from all that I have ever known, that I can hardly believe its existence possible. Nevertheless, I hope it comes true. Anyway," resignedly, "it is too late, if it were of any use, to look back."

"That is true. But in a very little while I shall have taken your future and made it mine, and I shall then be responsible for its fulfillment. Trust me, Dorothy."

he pleaded, "for the joys of the morrow and for the replacing of your yesterday with a greater today."

"There is nothing left for me to do, now, but to trust you, is there, Bob?" asked Dorothy plaintively.

"There has never been anything else you could safely do but to trust me, Dorothy. The fact that you did not do so long ago, showed a lack of wisdom which you proudly boasted you possessed."

"Well, I boast of nothing, now," replied Dorothy listlessly. "But don't talk about that any more; tell me something more of this wonderful kingdom which is yours and is soon to be mine."

"There is so much to tell and so little you are able to understand, now, Dorothy. I might tell you many things, but what would be the use? You would fail utterly to appreciate their beauty or significance. They are the things of tomorrow, while you, you must remember, are still a part of today."

Dorothy moved restlessly in her seat.

"Have we much farther to go before we arrive at our destination?" asked she.

"Not so very far; we are very nearly there. Anxious to have it over with?" the doctor asked teasingly.

"Well, I shall not be sorry when it is," replied Dorothy, vainly endeavoring to control the trembling of her lips.

"Nor shall I," replied he. "However, it isn't going to be half as bad as you think," and he patted her hand reassuringly.

At that instant the car stopped at the entrance of a very narrow road. It was sufficiently wide to permit the tread of the human foot, but forbade all other conveyances. Here John got down from his seat and opened the door.

"We get out here, Dorothy," said the doctor, rising to his feet and stepping to the sidewalk.

"Do we?" queried she, getting to her feet and looking curiously around. "But I don't see any churches," added she as she placed her hand in the doctor's and stepped out, and she glanced anxiously up and down on both sides of the avenue.

"They are not necessary to our union," said the doctor, taking her arm and directing her steps toward the narrow entrance. "We will find our temple at the end of this road."

As they stood and viewed the road from the entrance, it seemed to Dorothy that it extended in a straight line a great, great distance, but in reality it proved to be a very, very short road. At the end of it, entirely covering the ground and concealing all that lay beyond, stood a huge temple. Indescribably

beautiful was this monument of unsurpassed architecture, defying in its structure and being all imitation; nor was it possible for any alien school to admit of its reproduction. Through its large doors passed in and out a great multitude of men, women and children. With appalling indifference to the marvelous beauty of this magnificent edifice they came and went. Some, in their hurry, gave it barely a glance as they stepped in and stepped out. Others, moving more leisurely, paused for a moment or so to gaze upon it with more or less idle curiosity, while others, lazily loitering about, amused themselves with a show of seeming interest; but they, too, finally, wearied of what to them were its many bewildering intricacies, passed on.

Awed by its gigantic proportions, Dorothy withdrew her arm from the doctor's and, stopping abruptly in the road, surveyed it with evident uneasiness. Its form was familiar and, in a vague way, it seemed to her to strangely resemble the representation of existing humanity.

"What an extraordinary building, Bob!" she exclaimed, stepping to one side a little and regarding it somewhat fearfully.

"Do you think so, Dorothy?"

"Indeed I do! Don't you?"

"I can't say that I do," replied the doctor, smiling. "But then, that may be because it has always been my place of worship. You see, I know no other temple but this."

"And yet you have never brought me here before?"

"It was not my fault; you know I could not prevail upon you to come, Dorothy."

"You never asked me."

"Oh, yes, I have."

"I don't remember."

"But I have. Not only have I asked you, but I have pleaded with you to worship with me in my temple. You preferred your own, your temples of brick and stone, and you found that these, too, had their limitations."

"And has not this, also, its limitations?"

"When united to me, no," replied the doctor, his face shining. "As it is impossible to render a perfect service without me, so also it is impossible to truly worship in this temple without me. To worship with me, here, Dorothy, we must be united; old things must pass away and all things become new. But come, they are waiting," and the doctor once more placed his arm within Dorothy's.

"Who are waiting?" asked Dorothy, reluctantly per-

mitting him to lead her toward the entrance of the temple.

"The forces which are to make us one," replied the doctor, releasing her arm and pushing open the doors to permit them to enter.

Side by side, up the long aisle they went until they reached the chancel-rail, where they stopped and stood perfectly still, listening to the murmuring of the many riotous voices that filled the air about them. Then a voice which silenced all the others filled the mighty temple. It was like the roar of the raging sea and of the driving wind. Loudly it thundered forth its commands, and Dorothy listened and trembled; with authority it made its mandates known, and, as peal after peal rang out, her courage and strength deserted her. Turning, she put out two unsteady hands and clung, weak and drooping, to Doctor Ross and hid her face upon his breast. Thus she stood, repeating feebly, after that awful voice, the words which were to make them one.

At last it was all over and silence once more reigned within the temple. With a sigh of relief, Dorothy made a weak attempt to lift her head; but in vain, for with a shuddering groan, which shook her from head to foot, she slipped a lifeless heap to the floor.

Although dead to all that was without, Dorothy was keenly alive to the growing disturbances that were

within. A war, over which she had no control, was being waged; the members of her body were arrayed against each other. It was a strife between the new and the old, between youth and old age. And what a strife! How they struggled for supremacy! The old, in their determination not to make way for the new, battled fiercely with their adversaries. Not willingly would they surrender her to their opponents. In fact, they stubbornly decreed there should be no surrender; they would retain what they had or die in the losing. The new, no less unyielding, fought their foes valiantly, holding determinedly every bit of ground gained. On and on they pressed, forcing back, step by step, the old, who, in spite of age and worn-out and much-used weapons, fought bravely. They were, however, no match for the new, and their boasted strength was a weak thing when directed against that of the enemy; and their implements of war were as the toys of children when used in combat with the up-to-date ones of the new. Bravely they tried to hold their ground, but in vain. Back and back they are pressed until there is no longer any standing room. Vanquished at last are they, and prisoners of war must they become. The new are now in possession of the field and, after due deliberation, sentence the old to confinement

in the historical structures of the past, their liberation being wholly dependent upon the instruction they may afford to coming humanity.

That her life was dependent upon the change through which she was going, Dorothy was vaguely conscious; and when she opened her eyes it was with the realization that she had been born anew, and her spirit rejoiced at the newness and fitness of things. And the face that was bending over her in tender solicitude was no longer the face of a stranger, for she recognized it as belonging to that of an old but untried friend. It was the face of the Great Father of Service. As she gazed into that all-inspiring face, fully alive at last to its wonderful beauty, she knew—and the knowledge filled her with unutterable gladness—that the veil that had obscured it from her vision for ages was rent in twain forever. Her whole being rang with the song that had been shut up in her heart for untold years— Such a joyous song it was, divinely composed, so sweet and tender, and yet withal so strong.

"Come, my child," said the melodious voice of the Father of Service, smiling and extending his hand to assist her to arise, "for your husband stands without, patiently awaiting the coming of his bride."

Without a word, Dorothy laid her hand in his and

obediently arose and accompanied him to the door of the temple. At the threshold stood her husband, who, at their approach, smiled and extended his hands.

"Love," said the Father of Service, addressing Doctor Ross, "I give into your keeping my child, Service," and taking the hands of Dorothy he placed them in the outstretched hands of her husband. "She will be to you a faithful, true and obedient wife, will you not, my daughter?"

"I will," earnestly replied Dorothy.

"And you, Love," continued the Father of Service, enfolding them both in his gigantic arms, "will be unto her a husband indeed. To no other could I so safely, so utterly and so happily confide her, for in you only is her abiding place. No longer will she be storm-tossed and tempest-driven, for you will be to her a pilot of ways, a leader of the paths wherein to dwell. As a wedding-gift, I present you with my mantle," and, removing his arms, he took from his shoulders a mantle of azure blue, trimmed with a soft, transparent material of pure white. This he placed about them.

"This mantle is indestructible and will last to the end of time," he said. "Now go forth into the world and give unto it the fruit of your perfect union, that mankind may eat and live."

Then Love and Service, with arms entwined, passed on and out into the world to fulfill their great mission. There will be no more stumbling for Service, for Love will ever be a light unto her feet. No longer will she prohibit Love from taking his place in the affairs of men, for now she recognizes her great need of him. There will be no more shadowy daylight, but a perfect day; no more hoping to end in idle dreaming, no seeming without a meaning, but a love of life and a perfect being.

CHAPTER XIX

HANNAH LEARNS OF THE DOCTOR'S MARRIAGE

WHEN Hannah arrived at the office the morning following the day when Dorothy and Doctor Ross (as we shall continue to call them) became one, she found the doctor already there, busily engaged in the perusal of the morning's mail.

"Good-morning," said he, glancing smilingly up as she entered.

"Good-morning, doctor," replied she, hurriedly unbuttoning her coat as she, with quickened step, crossed the room and opened the door leading into her office. In a few moments she came out ready for work.

"Is the mail unusually large this morning, doctor?" she asked.

"No; but I expect it will be from now on," he replied, looking up and bringing to view a face wholly transfigured. With her eyes fixed upon it, Hannah gazed with wondering awe and mute amazement. In outline the face was the same, and yet, in some unexplainable way, it was totally different in other re-

spects. There was the same nobility of expression, but the eyes had lost their look of sorrowful rebuke, and in their depths there glowed an unfathomable and unspeakable joy. The hitherto drawn and troubled brow was smooth and serene, and the smile that played about the lips was no longer sweetly grave and pathetically sad, but was tenderly happy and wonderfully glad. The skin, too, had changed and become healthy-hued. Truly, it was the face of a bride-groom rejoicing in the possession of his bride.

"Well, are you satisfied?" asked he, as Hannah continued to look speechlessly into his face. "Are you pleased with the improvement?"

"I can't say, yet," replied she, without removing her eyes. "You see, I was not, in any way, prepared for the change. May I ask what produced it?"

"Certainly. I was married yesterday."

"Married!" exclaimed Hannah incredulously. "You are joking. I can't believe it."

"Am I so impossible as all that?"

"No, it is not that. I do not believe there is a woman worthy of you."

"And yet no woman is truly worthy without me," said he, smiling.

"No?" queried she, wrinkling her forehead perplexedly. "I am afraid I don't quite understand you."

"That is because, in spite of our pleasant acquaintanceship, you have made no real effort to know me."

"I can't think that that is my fault," she replied thoughtfully. "Your altogether loveliness of character I cannot fail to admire, but," sadly shaking her head, "I despair of ever understanding it."

"And yet my admirable qualities are not something which you may not possess. They really belong to you and are the rightful inheritance of every member of the human family."

"I don't know about that," replied Hannah, doubtfully shaking her head; "for, if that is so, why is humanity so slow in claiming its inheritance?"

"Because of its self-satisfied ignorance, and it suffers therefor a painful consequence."

"It apparently is not cognizant of its cause," replied Hannah, sitting down upon a chair near the desk.

"And for that reason suffers the suffering."

"And is it not through striving and suffering that man hopes to attain perfection?" asked Hannah wonderingly.

"It is; but that is only because his blindness prohibits him from seeing any other way."

"Then, surely, he is not to blame if he is unable to see any other way," protested Hannah.

"He would not be, if his blindness were not of his own seeking."

"You mean he could see if he would, but he won't?"

"That is just it. He obstinately shuts his eyes, and it is only the way of the suffering that will make him open them. It is only by traveling this way that he can be induced to look for another and better way."

"Then it is the obstinacy of man which has made the way of suffering possible?"

"Yes; he prefers to travel the way of the blind, and will not, willingly, see any other. Questioningly, falteringly and with uncertain step he travels along, unmindful of the light flooding the roadway close by him. On, and on, with hands outstretched feeling his way, he goes, stumbling oft and receiving many a needless bruise and fall. To avoid the many prostrate forms lying in his path, his steps are necessarily increased and he makes but little headway. Indeed," said the doctor, mournfully shaking his head, "his progress is a slow and painful one."

"Indeed it is," assented Hannah, sighing. "Why, oh why, is it necessary for man to learn only through painful experiences?" questioned she, adding, "and these, even, do not always avail."

"That is true; they do not. For, in spite of mistakes and unfortunate happenings, he, stubbornly dis-

regarding the cause, continues to blindly struggle on along the old pathway, unwilling to open his eyes to the light of day which shines over him, in him and around him; and, at last, unable to stagger longer under the burdens of life which he has piled, bit by bit, upon his shoulders, he becomes one more prostrate form to fill the roadway, and, muttering unintelligible somethings about a Divine Providence, he lies there, not knowing that he is a victim of his own blindness."

"You are awfully hard upon poor man, doctor," said Hannah, smiling sadly and shaking her head dolefully.

"No, indeed," denied the doctor. "I am simply stating a fact."

"Is there no way to relieve man of this terrible blindness you have described?" asked Hannah.

"There is but one."

"And what is that?"

"Love."

"Love!" exclaimed Hannah. "Why, there is nothing in the world so blind as Love!"

"Such an understanding of Love is but a proof of man's blindness," said the doctor, rising from his chair and beginning to walk up and down the room. "There is naught so great a stranger to man than Love."

"What is this, then, that humanity calls Love?"

"An exalted self or one of the emotions of the instinctive animal. In other words, it is a very poor counterfeit of what Love really is."

"It is not always reliable, that is true," agreed Hannah. "It passes so often away with youth, and leaves to loneliness the remaining years."

"Ah, no! not Love," said the doctor, throwing out his hands protestingly. "Love is enduring, faithful and unchanging. No fickle or ephemeral thing is he, here today and gone tomorrow, but his presence is ever assured and certain, and is as necessary to man's existence as the light from the sun or the air he breathes."

"If this be true," asked Hannah, perplexed, "how is it possible that man remains so ignorant of his presence?"

"Does the knowledge that the sun shines in the heavens render the pathway of the blind any clearer?"

"No."

"What benefit, then, is the slumbering fact that Love is ready and willing to lead humanity in the way of all-understanding, if it shuts its eyes and will not see?"

"But what of the consequences? Surely, if man cannot see, he must lose his way."

"That is true; he loses the way and becomes a wan-

derer upon the earth; an alien not only to his brethren, but also to himself."

"An alien to himself?" repeated Hannah, puzzled. "What do you mean by that?"

"Because he knows not himself and, therefore, cannot know another."

"Am I, then, a stranger to my child?"

"You are, if you know not yourself. No matter how close the human relationship, without the undimming light of Love, there can be no real knowledge of one's self or another. The eyes must be opened."

"Whether my eyes are opened or not, I do not know; but I do know I love my child," declared Hannah stoutly.

"Why do you love him?"

"Because he is mine."

"And for no other reason?"

"Is there any other greater reason that I can give you? He is all I have, my baby, my little, blind boy!"

"Not any that you are capable of understanding at present, at any rate. However, there is a greater reason, which you will learn as the years go by."

"I am very well satisfied with the one I have given you."

"That is because your eyes are not opened."

"And I don't know as I want them opened, if the opening is to bring a knowledge which will make of my mother-love a little thing."

"But it will not do that. Instead, you will comprehend and appreciate in its fulness what a wonderfully great thing it is, this mother-love."

"I can't see how that can possibly be, for just now it is great and big enough to warm and brighten every cold and dark corner of my life."

"Ah! but then, it will not only warm and brighten the dark corners of life, it will banish them."

"You're a dreamer," replied Hannah, smiling.

"And my dreams will come true," and the words rang clear and true, defying contradiction.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I know."

"How do you know?"

"You would not understand if I should tell you; therefore, I can only say, I do."

"And how is all this to come about?"

"Through my marriage."

"Through your marriage!" repeated Hannah incredulously. "What has that got to do with it?"

"Everything."

"I don't understand. Won't you explain?"

The doctor stopped in his walk and again took his seat at his desk. He regarded Hannah with a quizzical smile for several seconds, and then he said:

"The union, which took place between the lady and myself yesterday, will bring about a happy change in the affairs of men. Unfortunately, up to this time, they have been more or less unhappy and disappointing, owing to their many complications and to the fact that their direction was the sole and uninterrupted concern of my wife, who, although willing, was totally unable to cope with their growing intricacies. For a long, long time she was slow to realize her limitations and believed unquestioningly in her ability to bring everything out right and all things would eventually adjust themselves to the needs of man. This erroneous understanding and false view of the situation at last slowly dawned upon her, and she perceived, to her dismay and astonishment, her multiplying difficulties. Even so, she proudly disdained all proffers of assistance, determining to overcome them alone; but, in spite of her perseverance and hard work, she found, instead of diminishing, they increased, and the 'home-living place' which she hopes to establish was not a success. It——"

"Oh, I wonder why I did not think of her!" ex-

claimed Hannah excitedly. "So it is Miss Dorothy Richardson whom you have chosen for your wife?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, with one of his altogether beautiful smiles; "Miss Dorothy Richardson and I are one."

"Well, you are to be congratulated. She is such an excellent woman, and you—well, I can't tell you what I think of you."

"You will not object, then, to remain in our service?"

"No, indeed, I shall be very glad to do so."

"Then that is arranged," said he, rising. "You may begin your correspondence; the letters are all marked for reply."

"Very well, doctor," replied Hannah, standing up; and, picking up the neat pile of letters, she walked back to her office. The click of the latch and the closing of the door leading into the hall told her the doctor had gone; and, standing by her desk, she tried to compose her mind for the work that was before her. But this she found very difficult, for the marriage of the doctor, although decidedly fortunate, was so surprising. She had, in some way, believed he would never marry. She was glad, however, for one thing—it would mean no change in her life. She was to remain.

Before sitting down to her work, she took from a pocket of her coat a letter that she had received that morning from her father and mother. She opened it and for the second time read it carefully, and then slowly folded it and put it back in her pocket. Very thoughtfully she sat down upon her chair in front of her desk.

"Poor little Ronald," said she, softly talking to herself, while a tender smile played about her lips, "do they think, no matter how great the inducement offered, I would part with you? Is there aught, rather, I would not give up for you, and find my joy and delight in the giving? What would father, mother, or home be to me without you, my little, blind, baby-boy? They speak of the disgrace your presence would bring to them in their old age and ask me to place you in other hands than mine, and then go home to them. How can they suggest such a thing, when to do so would mean your every essential deprivation? They do not hesitate to recommend that I place upon your tiny head, honey-boy, the consequence of my wrong-doing, making you pay the price of what they deem my disgrace and shame. Never mind, little man, mother counts the shame and disgrace as naught with the pleasure of having you. What cares she for dis-

grace as long as it never touches you? and it never will, if she can help it. Sometimes, mother is glad you are blind, son; she can hold you the longer and tighter. Nevertheless, dear, innocent little chap, mother will never go home alone; when she goes, you will go with her. Nay, nay, little son, our four-room apartment will be all the home mother will ever want, if to get it she has to part with you— But there, the tears are falling, and that will never do; for there are a lot of letters in front of mother which she must answer and see that they are mailed. So, baby-mine, mother must stop thinking about you for a little while and get to work." And, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief, Hannah opened her desk.

At twelve o'clock the letters were all answered and she placed them upon the doctor's desk. Then she adjusted her cap and smoothed her hair and was about to wash her hands when the door opened and Dorothy, accompanied by her husband, came into the room.

"Good-morning, Miss Thompson," said Dorothy, walking leisurely over to where Hannah smilingly stood, and extended her hand.

"Good-morning, M—" replied Hannah hesitatingly, her hand resting for an instant in Dorothy's. "How are you this morning?"

"Very well. And you?"

"I can't complain."

"Well," after an embarrassing silence of several seconds, "why don't you wish me happiness?" asked Dorothy, looking into Hannah's face with smiling scrutiny, "for your face expresses only too surely that you already have been told of my passing from single-blessedness into matrimonial bliss."

"Does it?" asked Hannah, laughing. "I didn't know it was such a telltale. I must exercise greater caution, or it will be betraying me when I least wish it to. In this instance, however, I cannot plead ignorance, for Doctor Ross told me about the happy event shortly after I came in this morning."

"Oh, you awful man," said Dorothy, with a smile and a rebuking shake of her head at her husband, "to deprive me of the pleasure of proclaiming to one and all the greatest event of my existence."

"You will have plenty of time to do that, Dorothy," said the doctor, returning her smile. "But come, let me help you off with your coat," and stepping to her side he removed from her shoulders her new wedding-coat; and, when she had replaced the pins in her hat, he took it from her and hung both up upon the rack. "Now," after he had hung up his own, "I will look

over my letters and then we will make arrangements to leave here this afternoon."

"And I will improve the opportunity to become better acquainted with Miss Thompson," said Dorothy, establishing herself comfortably in one of the doctor's big, leather armchairs. "How is little Ronald?" asked she, addressing Hannah.

"He is as well as usual," replied Hannah, moving a little to one side to permit the doctor to reach his desk.

"And I trust that is as well as it is possible for him to be. But why not sit down?" and Dorothy motioned with her hand to the chair opposite.

Hannah smiled and sat down.

"Now let us talk about your little boy," said Dorothy, leaning back in her chair. "I am afraid you may think I have not given him much attention, but I can assure you it really was not my fault. You see, my time was completely taken up with so many other things I deemed of greater importance that the children were totally neglected. However," with a bright smile, "I hope now to become better acquainted with them, and they and I will begin to learn of each other. It is strange, isn't it," mused she, "that we grown-up people disdain the knowledge to be gained

by associating with the child, and give it no serious thought, but receive it with more or less indulgent amusement?"

"Yes," agreed Hannah, "we are not apt to consider it of much importance, and prefer to regard the sayings and doings of children as little better than the murmurings and antics of other delightful little animals."

"Well, I want to learn all that your little son can teach me, for in the ways of children I am woefully ignorant, and I am very desirous that he and I, as the days go by, shall become the best of friends."

"Thank you," murmured Hannah, striving to overcome a growing nervousness, herebefore wholly unknown to her. "I am sure he will appreciate your friendship. You will not expect too much of him, will you? for you know, poor little chap, he is blind."

"Yes, I know," and Dorothy sighed.

"They are all ready now for enclosing," remarked the doctor, rising from his desk.

"Very well, I will attend to them at once," replied Hannah; and, getting up from her chair, she took the letters from the desk and disappeared with them into her office, closing the door gently behind her.

"And so you were talking about Hannah's boy," said the doctor to his wife.

"Yes, isn't it too bad he is blind?"

"Yes, but he will not continue to be so."

"No?" queried Dorothy, surprised. "It is possible, then, that some day he may see?"

"Quite."

"Oh, I am so glad! Does his mother know? Have you told her?"

"All that she is capable of understanding at present."

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her under certain conditions he would receive his sight."

"And what are they?"

"Those which shall come from our union, Dorothy. Not only will they remove little Ronald's blindness, but will make impossible the blindness of every child born into the world."

"Will it, indeed, do that?"

"It will, indeed," replied the doctor, seating himself in the chair that Hannah had vacated.

Just then the bell announcing the midday meal rang clear and loud from the foot of the basement steps. The doctor and his wife made no movement to indicate that they intended to respond to its summons. Instead, they sat quietly talking; and Hannah, when she opened the door of her office a few minutes later

was surprised to find them sitting there. When the bell rang, she thought, of course, they would go right down to luncheon.

"I didn't expect to find you here," she said, going to the bowl to wash her hands. "I thought you would be downstairs."

"No: we are waiting for you," replied the doctor, smilingly raising his head. "As I have ceased to be a lodger and am now a part of the 'home-living place,' it will be necessary for you to take your meals there, also. So while we are getting ready to go over, put on your hat and coat. Leave everything as it is, here, for I have instructed John to take charge."

Hannah hastened to do his bidding, and in a very few minutes they were on their way to the "home-living place."

CHAPTER XX

MRS. THOMPSON GETS A GLIMPSE OF THE "HOME-LIVING PLACE"

"WHAT'S going on here?" ased Mrs. Thompson, very much surprised, of Martha, who admitted her into the little flat. "Looks very much as though my daughter intended to move," gravely regarding the pieces of furniture and boxes which occupied nearly the entire space of the narrow hall.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Martha, closing the door.

"Is Miss Hannah in?"

"Yes, ma'am, she's inside," and Martha indicated by a nod of her head the room at the end of the hall.

"Very well, I'll find her," and Mrs. Thompson began slowly to make her way down the crowded passageway.

"All right, ma'am," and Martha went back to her packing in the kitchen.

When Mrs. Thompson reached the entrance of the room, she stopped and glanced uneasily at the bare floor and walls and the furniture, pushed to one side

of the room, all ready for the moving-van. Hannah's back was to her; she was kneeling upon the floor in front of a trunk in which she was packing Ronald's clothes, which lay piled up on a chair beside her. Her mother's step upon the bare boards, however, caused her to turn her head, and with an exclamation of delight she sprang to her feet and rushed to meet her, saying:

"Why, mother, what good wind brought you here today?"

"I'm not sure whether it was a good or a bad wind," replied her mother, bending her head to receive Hannah's kiss. "I'll tell you better about that after you have told me the meaning of this," and she indicated with a wave of her hand the dismantled room.

"We are going to move, mother, that's all," replied her daughter, stepping back and gathering up in her arms the clothing lying on the chair and placing it over the open top of the trunk. "Come, sit here," wiping with her apron the dust from the chair, "and I'll tell you all about it. I won't ask you to take off your hat, for there is no place to put it where it will be safer than upon your head."

"Why, I thought you were very well satisfied here," said her mother as she sat down. "Where is Ronald?"

"He is over with Doctor and Mrs. Ross," replied Hannah, kneeling down upon the floor and resuming her packing. "You remember, I told you of his marriage in my last letter."

"Yes; and has it turned out as happily as expected?"

"So far it has fulfilled every expectation."

"That's encouraging. And, apparently, they do not object to the unfortunate circumstances connected with Ronald's birth."

"Not at all. For them, they do not exist, and he is only too happy when permitted to be with them."

"I wish I might have him," said Mrs. Thompson, sighing regrettully; "but it is no use thinking of such a thing, for your father will not consent."

"It's just as well, perhaps," replied Hannah thoughtfully.

"Perhaps so. But you have not told me anything of your proposed new location. It is, of course, more desirable than what you have here, or else you would not have moved."

"It is, indeed."

"And your expenses—they will be greater, I suppose?"

"I can't say that they will. You see, I have decided

to move to the 'home-living place,' established by Doctor and Mrs. Ross, and they are to be responsible for any expense I may incur."

"Do you think that altogether wise?"

"I do. In fact it is the only wise thing I have ever done in my life. Oh, mother," said Hannah, laying a hand upon her mother's knee and looking up earnestly into her face, "if you only knew the beautiful conditions prevailing in their 'home-living place,' the thing that would astonish you the most would be that anyone could hesitate to become a part of it! No greater foundation can be found than that upon which it is built, the imperishable and everlasting foundation of Love and Service."

"And do you think you will be happy there?" asked her mother, with a tender smile, as she laid her hand affectionately upon her daughter's head.

"I have no doubt of it; for, if happiness is to be found anywhere, it must be found there."

"I should want to be very sure of it, my child," said Mrs. Thompson, smiling gravely, "for the promises which lead us into the pursuit of happiness are very slow of fulfillment."

"That is true, mother," agreed Hannah, "but I have learned, by painful experience, it is because we follow

the formulating of our own selfish promises in the false pursuit of happiness. Happiness, I have found, is no elusive thing, now here, then there, and then elsewhere. She does not seek to deceive nor to betray, a thing of yesterday and not of today. Something that steals away when tomorrow's here, leaving all stricken, stark and drear. No, no, happiness is ever faithful and true, and it is we who are faithless, it is we who are untrue to ourselves and to her."

"Perhaps you are right, I don't know," said Mrs. Thompson sighing. "But what of Martha?"

"She will go with me. Indeed, she belongs there, for has she not, these many years, lived daily the life of the 'home-living place'? The conditions which exist there will cause her no wonderment nor be to her at all strange. She will be perfectly at home with surroundings which to me are as equally indescribable as they are incomprehensible. While I can admire and marvel, I am unable to fully understand or appreciate the working of the forces employed. And yet, Doctor Ross says they are so simple they are understood by the child."

"Your lack of understanding is not surprising, then, for is it not the simple things of life which confound us?" queried Mrs. Thompson. "But go on with your packing."

"Before I do," said Hannah, rising, "I'll tell Martha to make us a cup of tea. It must be nearly lunch-time. Is it?" as Mrs. Thompson looked at her watch.

"Just twelve."

"I thought so," and Hannah hurried out.

Almost immediately she was back, and, as she chatted with her mother, finished packing the trunk, and when Martha came in with the tea, it stood closed and locked and ready for strapping.

"When we have finished our tea, I'll put on my hat and coat and we'll go over and see Ronald," said Hannah as she took the tray from Martha and set it upon the top of the trunk. "That is all, Martha," turning with a smile to the waiting bent figure, "you may go," and, with a nod of her grizzled head, Martha turned and walked out of the room.

"Are you not afraid the doctor and his wife may regard it as rather an intrusion?" questioned Mrs. Thompson, as she unfolded the paper napkin Hannah placed upon her lap.

"No indeed, they will both be glad to see you, and I am very anxious that you should meet them," and Hannah poured out a cup of tea and handed it to her mother. "Here, I'll place the cream and sugar on the trunk right near you, so you may help yourself. I

know the service is novel and not at all what you are accustomed to, but you will pardon it in this instance."

"Don't mention it, my child; I'm only too glad to be with you," and Mrs. Thompson took between her forefinger and thumb a lump of sugar and dropped it into her tea, and then poured sufficient cream from the pitcher to color it.

"Then you won't object to eating your sandwich from the trunk, also," and Hannah placed a small plate upon which was laid two thinly sliced pieces of bread and butter enclosing crisp lettuce leaves.

"No, it's all right. Don't bother about me, I'll help myself. Now, to get back to Ronald, if you think it wise I should dearly love to go over and see him."

"And are you not anxious, after all I have told you, to see the doctor and his wife?" asked Hannah disappointedly.

"Not so anxious to see them as I am to learn something of this 'home-living place' they have established. But that is only because you are about to make it your home; otherwise, I should not be at all interested."

"After you have learned something about it you may wish to make it your home," said Hannah, laughing. "And what would father say about that?"

"He would never permit it."

"He might not be able to prevent it," said Hannah as she lifted the teapot from the tray. "Have another cup of tea and another sandwich?"

"No, no, nothing more. If I am to see much of Ronald, we must go over to the doctor's as soon as possible, for I have to leave for home shortly after three."

"We will go right away," said Hannah, rising and taking from the wardrobe her coat and hat, which she quickly put on. "If I had known you were coming, I wouldn't have had these things put in the hall," said she, as she opened the door of the apartment and preceded her mother out.

"If you can put up with the inconvenience, I am sure I should not object," replied Mrs. Thompson, following her daughter down the stairs.

Hannah laughed happily, and her mother's heart gladdened at the sound. Ah! if it rested with her, Hannah and her baby should seek no other "home-living place" but hers. She would close the door upon the world and live only for them. What cared she for money or position? They were nothing in comparison with the companionship, of which they deprived her, of her daughter and her child. Gladly would she dispense with the former, if she could but

have the latter. And as she thought of her husband, her heart hardened toward him. He had asked her that morning before leaving home to try and prevail upon Hannah to give up her child. "Surely," he had said, "there are plenty of places in a large city where a child would be well cared for, for pay." How stubbornly he had refused to listen to her pleadings that they permit Hannah to bring her baby home, thundering out at her: "No! no! I say, no! Don't speak of that again to me!" Well, she would never ask Hannah to give up her child, never, never! If her father was so blind that he could not see that they were responsible for their child and what was hers, she could and would. And when they climbed the steps leading into the "home-living place," she did so with no feeling of shrinking from a disagreeable task. This was to be her daughter's home and the home of her child; and, for that reason, she would try to understand and appreciate the forces at work here. When they reached the top step, the door opened, and Doctor Ross, with hand extended, stood in the doorway.

"I am very glad to see you, Mrs. Thompson," he said, looking smilingly from Hannah to her mother. "Come right in," and he took Mrs. Thompson's hand and gently drew her through the entrance, along the

hall and into the large room of the "home-living place." "Won't you sit down?" and he led her to a comfortable seat not far from the door. "My wife will bring Ronald, whom you are longing to see, I know, in presently."

"It is very good of you and your wife to take so great an interest in my little grandson," replied Mrs. Thompson as she sat down. "I assure you I fully appreciate it."

"Thank you," replied he. Then turning to where Hannah stood, he directed her with a motion of his hand to an open door on the right, to which she hastened her steps. "I think, though," resuming the conversation with Mrs. Thompson as he stepped to a chair a few feet from her and sat down, "it would be rather remarkable if we were not interested in the little fellow, for we love him and he is growing to love us."

"That is fortunate," replied Mrs. Thompson, her eyes scanning the doctor's face closely, "for, I believe, he and his mother expect to make their home here."

"Yes, I am glad to say, their home is to be here."

Just then their attention was attracted to the opening wide of the door of the room on the right, and Ronald, accompanied by his mother and Dorothy, came out

and directed their steps to where they were sitting. As they approached within a short distance of him, the doctor arose and, stepping forward, stooped and picked up the child and held him in his arms. This, apparently, was no strange place for Ronald to be, nor was he averse to being held there; for he unhesitatingly placed his baby-arms around the doctor's neck and laid his head confidingly against his shoulders.

"Were you talking to g'andmother, doctor?" asked he, putting up a tiny hand to pat the doctor's cheek.

"Yes, and I am going to carry you over and place you upon her lap, so you, too, may talk to her"; and, kissing the child's sunny hair, the doctor walked over and gave him into his grandmother's outstretched arms.

"And how is Ronald?" asked Mrs. Thompson, her arms closing around the little form. "And is my little man glad to see me?"

"I am quite well and vewy glad to see you g'andmother. Are you well and glad to see me?" asked he, gravely holding up his little blind face to be kissed.

"Grandmother is well, darling, and is ever and ever so glad to see you," replied Mrs. Thompson, her arms tightening around the child as she drew him closer to her.

"Mother," interposed Hannah from where she stood

between the doctor and his wife in the middle of the room, watching with shining eyes and trembling, smiling lips the meeting between her mother and baby-son, "you have not met Mrs. Ross."

"That is true," replied Mrs. Thompson, and she raised her eyes from the face of the child and looked over, with an apologetic smile, to where Dorothy stood.

"I am very glad to see you," said Dorothy, stepping quickly over to Mrs. Thompson's side, "and I want to bid you welcome to the 'home-living place.'"

"Thank you," replied Mrs. Thompson, taking the hand Dorothy extended, "I am beginning to feel very much at home."

"It gives me great pleasure to hear you say so," replied Dorothy, sitting down on a nearby stool, "and I hope, some day, you may decide to become a part of this wonderfully beautiful thing we have established."

"I hardly think so," replied Mrs. Thompson, with a doubtful shake of her head. "Not as long as my husband lives, anyway, for he, I know, would never sanction it."

"No?" queried Dorothy. "What would be his objection?"

"Well, it would necessitate the abandonment of his pride of position, of his wealth, of a hundred and one things he holds and prizes dearly."

"Oh, you never can tell," said Dorothy encouragingly; "he may be made to see, as I have been, the folly of such pride, and be willing, as I now am, to let Love have his way."

"I see you are quite ignorant of how greatly pride influences people in my station of life."

"Yes, I think I do," replied Dorothy slowly. "But I am learning, little by little, what a small thing it is and how cruelly indifferent it is to the best interests of man."

Mrs. Thompson's response was a wrinkled forehead, a puzzled smile and a mystified shake of the head, and she placed Ronald more comfortably upon her lap and laid his head gently against her breast.

At this, Dorothy's eyes traveled in wistful inquiry over to where her husband stood in the middle of the room. He, with Hannah, had been a silent listener to their conversation. As his eyes met hers, he read aright the message they conveyed, and in his smile and nod there was not only acquiescence, but comprehension as well. She needed him, and he only could respond to that need. So saying a few words in a low tone to Hannah, which caused her to immediately leave him and take up a position behind her mother's chair, he quickly crossed the room and drew up a chair to the other side of Mrs. Thompson and sat down. The conversation then became general.

The hour thus spent conversing with the doctor and his wife was not only a particularly agreeable one to Mrs. Thompson, but she found it also highly instructive; for, in that short time, she acquired a knowledge hitherto unpossessed by her, and one she deemed of no mean value. Just what its valuation might be, she was not quite able to determine, nor to interpret correctly its intrinsic worth; but, measured by a mother's love, it was to her incalculable, for it enabled her to conclude that Hannah and her boy could not have fallen into better hands than into those of the founders of the "home-living place." And it was with a mind relieved and a heart lightened that she kissed them and bade them goodby and started on her journey homeward.

CHAPTER XXI

FRANK, RESTORED TO HEALTH, LEAVES THE HOSPITAL OF THE NEW BIRTH

It was shortly after the marriage of Dorothy and Doctor Ross, that Frank—wholly cured and restored to perfect health and strength—accompanied by the doctor, passed out through the doors of the Hospital of The New Birth.

As he walked down the steps and entered the doctor's automobile, it would be difficult for anyone who had been familiar with Frank's face and form before his admission into the hospital to recognize them now: for, in place of the bent, stooping shoulders, the reluctant and faltering step and the hesitation of an evidently discouraged and dejected manhood, there was the erect carriage, the firm, quick step and the expressed and unquestioned assurance in face and manner of man's right to be and do. Youth at its best was his; and, as one beheld him in all the newness of life, it was to conclude that for him to live was indeed well worth while; for he was good to look upon. The

tones of his voice, as he conversed with the doctor, the light of his eyes and the smooth, unwrinkled brow, all proclaimed a regenerated manhood—that man, at last, had come into his own—into a kingdom whose every breath was fragrant with the joy of being, whose sight was of an infinite seeing and in all of its doings there was a wonderful meaning.

On their way homeward, Doctor Ross spoke of his marriage to Dorothy and dwelt largely upon the changes it would make in the "home-living place," all of which interested Frank immensely, and he remarked when the doctor had finished speaking:

"Ah, now it will be a 'home-living place,' indeed!"

"But we must consider you," said the doctor, laying a hand affectionately upon Frank's shoulder. "Now that you are well and strong, what work shall I assign you to in the 'home-living place?'"

"The seeking of patients," promptly replied Frank with a smile, "for, I can assure you, there is no other work I should so greatly enjoy."

"There is none other so important," returned the doctor, "excepting the finding, and that is assured if one seeks aright."

"And I, now being in my right mind, shall seek aright," replied Frank, the light of his eyes being ex-

ceedingly tender as he looked thoughtfully into the distance.

"Yes, there is no doubt, now, but that you will," replied the doctor, bestowing upon Frank one of his beautiful smiles. "However, here we are," and the car drew up at the curb. "The 'home-living place' is just where you left it, you see," and the doctor rose and stepped out upon the sidewalk.

"Yes, but I have no doubt I shall find it quite a different place," replied Frank, getting out and following the doctor up the steps.

"Somewhat, yes," said the doctor as he pushed the door open and held it so for Frank to enter. "Nevertheless, if it is to steadily and unquestionably improve, your co-operative assistance is an absolute necessity. Isn't that so, my dear?" said he to his wife, who was standing at the door to greet them.

"It certainly is," replied she, holding up her face to receive her husband's kiss. Then turning to Frank with a friendly smile, she held out her hand to him and said:

"How-do-you-do, Mr. Thompson, or Frank, as Bob has told me to call you. I am very glad to welcome you back to the 'home-living place.'"

"Thank you," he replied, taking her hand and press-

ing it gently, "it is good to get back," and releasing her hand he closed the door and followed them up the hall. Upon coming to the door of his room, he laid his hand upon the knob and was about to turn it, when Dorothy, turning her head quickly, interposed with, "Not yet, there is someone else in there who would like to see you," and with a pretty movement of her head she indicated a room, at the entrance of which the hall ended.

"Indeed," said he; and, removing his hand from the knob, he continued on.

"And we, Dorothy," said the doctor, placing his arm about her, "will go in here," and he opened the door of the room on the right.

When Frank entered the room, Hannah was seated on a chair talking to her boy who was standing by her knee. She arose as he addressed her and came forward.

"So, at last, you are back," said she, and they shook hands warmly. "It seems such a long, long time since you went away. But my," stepping back and regarding him wonderingly and with not a little curiosity, "you have improved. So much so, I should not have known you had I met you elsewhere. What great miracle caused so great a change in you?"

"The passing away of the old man and the coming of the new."

"And do you think it possible so great a change could be brought about in me?"

"Indeed, I do."

"Ah, but then I should have to leave Ronald," and she put out her hand and took one of the little hands held out in self-protecting fashion as the child felt his way to his mother.

Frank smiled tenderly down upon the little chap.

"Yes," said he; "but the treatment accorded you would be, to him, a priceless inheritance."

"But what is the treatment?"

"To know that, you must experience it."

"Well, would you recommend it?"

"I certainly would, for it is the only remedy that produces a cure."

"I would like to try it," said she thoughtfully, and she sat down upon a chair and took her boy upon her lap: "and the only thing that makes me hesitate is this little man of mine," and bending her head she kissed the soft curls.

"I will stay with Mart'a, mother," said the child, raising his baby-face with its large, sightless, blue eyes; and, putting a little hand up, he patted her cheek gently.

"And she would take good care of you, I know,

little son. But mother, somehow, cannot bear to leave her boy, even for a little while," and she pressed the child closely to her.

"But mother must leave him, some day," said Frank gently, sitting down upon a chair a few feet away, "and when she goes, she surely wants to leave him something infinitely greater and of more importance than the remembrance of her presence. She wants, I am sure, to leave him with a sight restored that he may tread the roadway of life fearlessly, with no thought of stumbling or falling; and that, as he approaches manhood, his questioning, faltering step may be firm and assured, and his changing weaknesses become an unalterable strength."

"Ah, if that could be possible!" sighed Hannah.

"It is possible."

"How?"

"There is but one way," replied Frank earnestly, "and that is your entrance into the Hospital of The New Birth. Old things must pass away, if you would have all things become new. Inherited social weaknesses must be replaced by inherited social strength if the children are to see and know the way wherein they should walk. There will, then, be no more seeking for the many pathways which are now believed to

lead to life, for all will know there is but the one, and to it the children's steps will be directed."

"And who will be a mother to my boy while I am gone?" asked Hannah with a trembling smile as she placed the child's sunny head against her breast.

"Mart'a will take care of me, mother," said Ronald sleepily, his baby-mouth opening wide into a yawn.

"But Martha isn't mother, darling. But, never mind," as his head began to slowly drop backwards from her breast to her arm, "go to sleep," replied Hannah, accompanying her words with a rocking, soothing motion of her knees. Then putting a finger upon her lips, she looked over smilingly at Frank and then down at her sleepy boy. Frank smiled and nodded understandingly, and they sat quietly and silently waiting for the little fellow to go to sleep.

They had not long to wait, for in a very little while Ronald was sound asleep; and Hannah straightened out his clothes, with that tender lingering touch mothers have, and was about to rise, when Frank hastily sprang to his feet and held out his arms for the sleeping child.

"No, no," said she softly, "he might wake," and, rising, she carried him over to a couch on one side of the room and laid him down. Then, after placing

a light covering over him, she leaned lovingly over and touched her lips to his hair. "Now we may resume our conversation," whispered she, as she straightened up and walked back to her chair and sat down.

"And so it is the leaving of your child that makes you hesitate to avail yourself of the many benefits to be derived from a treatment at the Hospital of The New Birth?" asked Frank in a low tone.

"Yes. He is all I have, you know. He is my world. A pretty small and unimportant one to others, no doubt, but, to me, he is all of the worlds rolled into one."

"I see," replied Frank slowly, his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the floor. "But have you taken into consideration that your deprivation is his also; and that you cannot impart unto him a knowledge greater than you possess?"

"That is very true, and I am afraid I have considered little else than the fact that he is mine! all mine! and belongs to no one else," replied Hannah, a sweet smile playing about her lips. "And," emphatically, "I am selfishly glad to know that this is true."

"But is it true?" asked Frank, raising his eyes and regarding Hannah questioningly. "That mothers thoughtlessly boast of it, I know, failing to realize, in

their vain human joy and pride, how really frail is their hold upon their vaunted possession. So scrupulously careful are they of the material casket, seeing that it is kept clean, properly dressed and fed, that they forget that within is a hidden chamber, the door of which is closed and locked, and to gain an entrance one must have the key. But alas! where is the key?"

"What key?" asked Hannah wonderingly.

"The key that will unlock the door of the hidden chamber of that beautiful piece of pink and white flesh that you boast you own. Do you possess it? And if so, have you unlocked the door and swept from within all that will prevent a life from being well lived?"

"What do you mean?" asked Hannah in amazement.

"I mean this: to fulfill your maternal obligations you must have this key."

"Key, or no key," replied Hannah impatiently, "I shall do my best for him."

"But if you know not what is best, how can you?"

"Then I shall do what seems best."

"And which really may be wrong."

"Then what am I to do?" asked Hannah helplessly.

"Find the key."

"What makes you so sure that I haven't it?"

"Your all too evident uncertainty," replied Frank, rising and walking over to the couch where Ronald slept. "That is, like all mothers, you are not altogether sure what is best for your child," and the tender loveliness of his face as he looked down upon her boy would have been a revelation to Hannah, could she but have seen it.

"That is, I am sorry to say," admitted Hannah, "only too true. But what are we mothers to do to be wholly sure that what we do is best for our children? Find the key, you say, but where are we to look?"

"You must seek it where it is only to be found, in the Hospital of The New Birth," replied Frank, turning around and facing her.

"Then I would be committing a great wrong to my boy, should I longer delay," said Hannah, her eyes leaving him and, with a wonderful affection expressed in their blue-gray depths, they rested upon her child.

"You would be depriving him of his rightful inheritance," said Frank, approaching her slowly.

"It is hard to leave him, even though I know he could be in no better hands than in those who have made the 'home-living place' possible," said Hannah with a heavy sigh.

"But, if he is to enter into the joy of the 'home-

living place,' your leaving him is an absolute necessity. If he is to see its beauties and understand its wonderful workings, the knowledge you impart to him must be greater than you now possess," said Frank with great earnestness. "Why, then, do you hesitate?"

"I shall not," replied Hannah, rising determinedly to her feet. "I shall ask the doctor to see that I am admitted at their earliest convenience."

"Which is whenever you are ready," said the doctor from the doorway. He had been standing there unobserved listening to their conversation.

"Then I shall arrange to go tomorrow."

"Very well," replied the doctor coming toward them. "I shall take you over and see that you are admitted." Then, laying a hand in a true brotherly fashion upon Frank's arm, he said to him: "You lost no time, I see, in seeking and securing a patient."

"Nor will she when she returns," replied Frank, smiling knowingly at the doctor.

CHAPTER XXII

FRANK AGAIN VISITS THE SHACK

With the coming of the morrow, Frank's heart burned to again visit the shack. This time he was going with a decidedly different purpose, for now no thought of self-destruction possessed him. Indeed, such a thought was not now possible, for within him dwelt the realization of a non-destroyable life. Nor did he wait until the evening, but went in the morning light of a perfect day. Once more his feet trod the road leading to the little pathway that led to the door of the shack. Reverently and stepping very softly he turned in at the gate and walked up the path. Then, taking the key from his pocket, he unlocked the door and gently pushed it open. Standing thoughtfully within, he looked around the room, surveying each object with unaccustomed interest. He then removed his hat and coat and hung them up on the same rack that had held his rain-soaked hat and coat some time before. Without closing the door, he seated himself where he could get a good view of the road and waited.

That she would come, he knew, for had she not told him that he would see her again, and he should then decide her name.

As he sat there waiting, there came from the distance the triumphant strains of a far-away music. At first it seemed like the gentle whisperings of the leaves as they swayed lazily back and forth upon their branches. Then it came nearer, and nearer, and he recognized in it the innumerable sounds of the many instruments at work in the world.

"Ah! but this was a different music from that which hitherto had fallen upon his ears. In it there was no discordant note, nor the jumbling of non-preconceived sounds, murmuring or loudly proclaiming in their irritation a confliction of tones. Ah, no! this was music. What blending of tones! How strong and yet so tender! How forceful and yet so kind! What sublimity of utterance! What height, what depth, what breadth! What vastness and fullness! and, yet, in all not a quivering note. It seemed as though every tree, leaf and flower, every tiny green blade of grass, every little root and shrub, responded to this matchless volume of sound.

Frank closed his eyes and gave himself wholly up to the pleasure of listening to this wonderful and all-

inspiring music. Indeed, so enrapt was he by the tale that it told, that he was unmindful of a gentle step outside and of the tall, slender form that later stood in the doorway; nor did he hear a voice that said: "Hear am I, my friend." And it was not until the music passed on and was gradually lost in the distance that he opened his eyes and saw that his expected guest had arrived.

With a smothered exclamation, he quickly arose and came forward.

"Pardon," he said, "my seeming indifference to your presence. Have you been here long?"

"No apology is necessary," she replied, smiling sweetly and giving him her hand. "That music you have been listening to," sitting down in the chair he placed for her, "is enough to absorb the whole attention of man. And now sit down, my friend," urged she, "and tell me how you are."

"Surely, that is not necessary," he replied, throwing back his head with a happy laugh, "when my whole being speaks for me."

"That is true. You are, I see, in perfect health."

"And you?" asked Frank solicitously, drawing his chair nearer to hers and sitting down.

"My health can never be better nor worse than that

of mankind's," replied she, regarding him intently with her large, brown eyes, "and their joys and sorrows must be alike mine."

"Ah! if I had but known and understood that," replied Frank with a mournful shake of his head, "all your days would have been healthful and joyous ones."

"So would they be, if all understood, but they do not. And, if you would have all my days healthful and happy ones, you must make them understand."

"I will."

"And you will teach them my name?"

"Indeed, I will, for do I not know it?"

"Then it will be well with you."

"It is well with me now."

"And will be forevermore."

"Yes," and Frank's voice lingered tenderly upon each word, "for how can it be otherwise, when Love, Service and Success await me in the 'home-living place.'"

"That is true," replied she quietly. "No greater honor can be bestowed upon man than that of being a co-worker with them. And to live with them is well worth while. Do you not believe so?" and a tender light filled her face.

"Indeed, I do—in fact, I know so."

"Then you no longer consider yourself a failure?"

"No," replied Frank decidedly, "I am what I was created to be, a success."

"I am glad to know," said she smiling broadly, "that my enforced companionship did not prevent you from finding the road to success."

"Oh no, it taught me that success or failure was not to be determined by accident nor the possession or non-possession of earthly properties, but rather in the losing of man's self and the finding of himself and in his obedience to the ruling of that finding."

"You have, then, come into your kingdom," said she, "and need fear no man."

"And no man, I am glad to say," added he, "need fear me."

"No, because you know the true relationship existing between you and your brother-man."

"Yes, and would that all knew it as I do," said he fervently.

"They will, in time, never fear," replied she encouragingly.

"Yes, but how many must suffer through the long years of waiting," replied Frank sadly.

"That is so," agreed she; "but the union which has taken place between Love and Service will greatly

lessen the time. True, there are many hard and bitter lessons for Service to learn; but, fortunately for the children of men, she has in her husband a teacher who is invincible and never makes a mistake."

"Indeed, he does not," heartily acquiesced Frank; "but it took a treatment at the Hospital of The New Birth to teach me that."

"And not to teach you, only," replied she gazing wistfully through the open door and off into the wooded distance, "but all mankind."

"If one would succeed, yes," agreed Frank.

"To possess such knowledge, you are wonderfully blessed," said she, withdrawing her eyes and turning them upon him with a serious smile. "But I must not tarry," and she rose from her chair.

"Shall I not see you again?" anxiously inquired Frank, getting quickly to his feet.

"Indeed, you shall," replied she, a beautiful smile lightening up her grave face, "for now you will not shun my society nor call me by a name that is not mine; and well will you know that the way man calls the way of failure is oft-times the way of success, and that the way he calls by my name is not mine at all, but is the way of lies, wherein the seed of deception is sown. And of all ways this is the most disappointing.

The sower sows the seed, and then eagerly awaits the appearance of the first tiny green leaf. Then with tender solicitude he watches carefully the continuance of its growth, anticipating its every demand and bestowing upon it every attention that it may grow quickly, and he spurns no suggestion that will enhance its beauty and hasten its growth. Indeed, not a thing is left undone that will produce a fruitful tree. In due season, the fruit appears, and the proud possessor calls in his neighbors to witness the result of his efforts. They outwardly rejoice with him, even though they may inwardly envy what they call 'his good luck.' But, in truth, it is not good luck that has produced this tree; its growth has been watched with unceasing care and nourished at great cost. For its luscious and most to be desired appearing fruit, man has paid a big price; and although he may proudly point to it as the proof of his success, at its heart, crumpled up and lying useless, are the forms of men—failures all, but failures due to the growth of this tree."

Frank sighed deeply and walked toward the door.

"Don't sigh, my friend," said she, laying a hand protestingly upon his arm as she joined him in the doorway, "for unto you is given the work of planting a different tree; and this will be a tree, indeed, the fruit

whereof one might well be proud. Although it will boast of no particular owner, its growth will be fostered by infinite care and tender reverence, and of its fruits all may partake—yea, even down to old age. But now I must leave you," and removing her hand from his arm she stepped down to the little path and, followed silently by Frank, walked to the gate. Then she stopped and, turning around, held out her hand.

"Goodby, my friend, until I shall see you again," said she. "Take back with you to my friends, Love and Service, my fondest greetings and tell them you have seen and talked with me and that my name is—" and she stopped and her dark-brown eyes met Frank's inquiringly.

"Success," he unhesitatingly replied.

"Good!" exclaimed she, her eyes shining. "Now farewell," and passing through the gate she walked with firm and assured step to the road, when she turned and with her hand waved a mute farewell to the silent figure standing at the gate.

Frank stepped out into the roadway; and, as he watched the tall, slender, erect form as it moved along with certain step, he saw, what he had hitherto failed to see, wondrously colored rays of light that enveloped her in a glorious mist. At last she passed out of

sight, and Frank with thoughtful face returned to the shack. Then he immediately put on his hat and coat and came out and locked the door, and with a song on his lips, not yet sung by the world, he began his journey back to the "home-living place," to Love and to Service.

THE END.

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